



**FILIPPE JOSÉ CASAL  
TELES NUNES**

**The analysis of Political Will and its role in  
Leadership: a study of Portuguese Mayors**

**Análise da Vontade Política e o seu papel na  
Liderança: um estudo sobre Presidentes de Câmara  
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tese apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Ciências Políticas, realizada sob a orientação científica do Doutor Gerry Stoker, Professor (Catedrático) of Politics and Governance, University of Southampton e co-orientação do Doutor José Manuel Moreira, Professor Catedrático da Secção Autónoma de Ciências Sociais Jurídicas e Políticas da Universidade de Aveiro

Para os meus pais.

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## keywords

Political Leadership, Political Will, Local Governance

## abstract

This thesis analyses the concept of Political Will, suggests its operationalization and establishes a typological theory that provides the necessary support for the diverse strategies of action of a leader. It claims that political leadership styles articulate a choice of action that results from the Political Will of a leader, which is determined by his intention and his discerned possibilities to act. One main research question guided our research: How does a political leader select and change his leadership style?

The most illustrative literature on political leadership is reviewed and the characteristics of democratic governance are analyzed. This is followed by an overview of the most noteworthy theories on the theme and a claim for the need of concept coherence, given the multiplicity of the existent standpoints. After that, we concentrate on leadership styles, with a focus on the local governance context.

Human action and intentionality are addressed with particular attention, as well as the motivational drivers for action, in order to advance a conceptualization of Political Will through two dimensions: *intention* and *possibility*. This analysis led to a number of relevant propositions: (1) Political Will 'exists' when the agent has the *intent* and the *possibility* to act; (2) these two dimensions 'translate' simultaneously what the agent believes he *must do* and *can do*; (3) *Intention* and *possibility* reflect diverse but limited worldviews; (4) political leadership styles result from the agent's Political Will; (5) different combinations of the *expected* and *actual* worldviews result in different leadership styles; and (6) political leadership styles can change accordingly to several strategies which allow conformity or reflect reaction to worldviews.

We suggested the operationalization of the two dimensions of Political Will through the analytical tool of Grid-group Theory, which provided the identification of the heuristic devices that allowed further comprehension on the subjectivity of the agent's choice. Four standard property spaces – representing four types of leadership styles – result from a preliminary approach to this process. Afterwards, and because these dimensions operate simultaneously, we advance on the analysis and suggest some plausible heuristical conflicts to happen and describe which consequences, strategies and type migrations are conceivable. An inclusive and more complete set of resulting property spaces renders fourteen different types of leadership styles and sixty different predictable causal paths that result from the expected *migration strategies*.

Case-studies were conducted as *plausibility probes* designed to provide improvements to our theoretical claims and addressed the cases we selected for research purposes: Portuguese Mayors. The findings from five case studies are discussed and the probable impact and congruence of each with the theoretical claims are assessed. The communalities of the causal mechanisms related to the function of *intention* and *possibility* as the dimensions of Political Will and their role in explaining different leadership styles are, finally, addressed.

To conclude, we advance some repercussions, mainly in the public policies field of research, and suggest a number of different and necessary paths for further work.

## palavras-chave

Liderança Política, Vontade Política, Governação Local

## resumo

Esta tese analisa o conceito de Vontade Política, sugere a sua operacionalização e estabelece uma teoria tipológica que garante o suporte necessário para as diversas estratégias de acção de um líder. Afirma que os estilos de liderança política articulam uma escolha de acção que resulta da Vontade Política de um líder, que é determinada pela sua intenção e pelas possibilidades de acção que percepção. Uma questão de investigação principal orientou este trabalho: como é que um líder político selecciona e muda o seu estilo de liderança?

A literatura mais ilustrativa sobre liderança política é revista e as características da governança contemporânea são analisadas. Segue-se uma perspectiva sobre as teorias mais relevantes sobre este tema e a afirmação da necessidade de coerência conceptual, dada a multiplicidade de abordagens. Após isto, centramo-nos nos estilos de liderança, com um enfoque no contexto da governação local.

A acção humana e a intencionalidade são abordadas com particular atenção, tal como os estímulos motivacionais para a acção, tendo em vista a conceptualização da Vontade Política através de duas dimensões: *intenção* e *possibilidade*. Esta análise possibilitou um conjunto de proposições relevantes: (1) a Vontade Política 'existe' quando o agente tem a *intenção* e a *possibilidade* de agir; (2) estas duas dimensões 'traduzem' simultaneamente o que o agente acredita que *deve fazer* e *pode fazer*; (3) *Intenção* e *possibilidade* reflectem mundivisões diferentes mas limitadas; (4) os estilos de liderança política resultam da Vontade Política do agente; (5) diferentes combinações de mundivisões *supostas* e *existentes* resultam em estilos de liderança diferentes; e (6) os estilos de liderança política podem mudar de acordo com diversas estratégias que permitem a conformidade ou reflectem uma reacção às mundivisões.

É sugerida a operacionalização das duas dimensões de Vontade Política através do modelo analítico da Teoria 'Grid-group', o que possibilita a identificação dos mecanismos heurísticos que permitiram uma melhor compreensão da subjectividade da escolha do agente. Quatro 'espaços de propriedades' comuns resultam de uma abordagem preliminar a este processo. No entanto, tendo em conta que estas dimensões operam simultaneamente, aprofundámos a análise e são sugeridas as consequências, as estratégias e as migrações entre tipos que alguns possíveis conflitos heurísticos podem causar. Um conjunto de 'espaços de propriedades' mais completo e inclusivo apresenta catorze diferentes tipos de estilos de liderança e sessenta diferentes percursos de causalidade susceptíveis de ocorrer dadas as estratégias de migração esperadas.

São conduzidos estudos de caso, enquanto 'testes de plausibilidade' construídos para a melhoria das proposições teóricas apresentadas, tendo sido seleccionados, por motivos de investigação, Presidentes de Câmara portugueses. As conclusões de cinco estudos de caso são discutidas, é avaliado o seu impacto e a congruência de cada uma das proposições teóricas. São, finalmente, avaliados os mecanismos causais relacionados com as funções de *intenção* e *possibilidade* enquanto dimensões de Vontade Política e o seu papel na explicação de diferentes estilos de liderança.

Para concluir, são identificadas algumas repercussões, particularmente no domínio da investigação em políticas públicas, e é sugerido um conjunto de caminhos diferentes e necessários de trabalho futuro.

# CONTENTS

Contents	i
List of tables	iii
List of figures	iv
CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION	
1.1 – Motivations and background	1
1.2 – Purpose and significance of the study	4
1.3 – Methodology and research design	6
1.4 – Outline of the thesis	9
CHAPTER II – THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	
2.1 – Setting the scene: what is political leadership?	11
2.2 – Political leadership in democratic societies	16
2.3 – What differentiates political leadership?	25
2.4 – Leadership theories and concept coherence	35
2.5 – Exploring leadership styles	45
2.6 – Trajectories of political leadership styles	54
CHAPTER III – WHY POLITICAL WILL MATTERS	
3.1 – Political will and Leadership	61
3.2 – History and leader’s biographies	68
3.3 – On human action and intentionality	71
3.4 – The structure-agency debate	83
3.5 – Conceptualizing Political Will	93
CHAPTER IV – GRID-GROUP DYNAMICS:	
THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL WILL	
4.1 – A theory of plural rationality	107
4.2 – Grid-group theory	111
4.3 – Leadership styles: the four standard property spaces	123
4.4 – The “surprises”: leaders’ actual and expected “worlds”	130
4.5 – Types migration: grid-group dynamics	134
4.6 – Political will and leadership styles: new property spaces	141
CHAPTER V – UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP STYLES – THE CASE OF PORTUGUESE MAYORS: RESEARCH THESIS, QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY	
5.1 – Preliminary epistemological stances	157
5.2 – Conceptual framework	166
5.2.1 – Political leadership styles	167
5.2.2 – Local Governance context	173
5.2.3 – Research questions	181



5.3 – Research design	184
5.3.1 – Methodology	184
5.3.2 – The use of comparative case studies	189
5.3.3 – Sampling: cases and respondents	194
5.3.4 – Data collection and interviews	196
5.3.5 – Operationalization and questions	199
5.3.6 – Data explication	204
CHAPTER VI – PORTUGUESE MAYORS:	
CASE STUDIES, MAIN FINDINGS AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT	
6.1 – Portuguese local governance	209
6.2 – Case studies	212
6.2.1 – An egalitarian through hierarchies (the facilitator)	214
6.2.2 – An hierarchist in command	223
6.2.3 – An egalitarian escaping to hierarchies when facing markets	232
6.2.4 – A hierarchic ‘debureaucratization’	242
6.2.5 – The ‘protector’	246
6.3 – Main finding: causal mechanisms communalities	250
CHAPTER VII – CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY REPERCUSSIONS	
7.1 – Political Will theory on Leadership	263
7.2 – Leadership styles and public policies: a proposal for further work	274
7.3 – Further repercussions	281
REFERENCES	285
ANNEXES	
A- Consent Form	301
B- Partial reproduction of interview transcript MunB-M-981398	303
C- Partial reproduction of field note MucA-FN2-987342	311

## ***List of tables***

Table 2.1 – Leadership concept problems: dichotomies	37
Table 2.2 – Leadership styles and problem solving	49
Table 2.3 – Situational leadership styles and leader/follower relationships	50
Table 4.1 – Typology of surprises	132
Table 4.2 – Political Will and styles of leadership resulting from ‘nature confirmation’	143
Table 4.3 – Political Will and styles of leadership resulting from ‘nature conflict’: Influence strategy	148
Table 4.4 – Political Will and styles of leadership resulting from ‘nature confirmation’ and CRISE Strategies	153
Table 6.1 – Case-studies summarized	261
Table 7.1 – Leadership styles: resources, strategies, roles and rules	280

## ***List of figures***

Figure 2.1 – Power and leadership styles	51
Figure 3.1 – Matrix of explanation of action	84
Figure 3.2 – Categories of action and Political Will	99
Figure 3.3 – Dimensions of Political Will	101
Figure 4.1 – Grid-group axis	116
Figure 4.2 – Grid-group cultural types	118
Figure 4.3 – Myths of nature	120
Figure 4.4 – Characterization of grid-group leadership styles and extreme possibilities	125
Figure 4.5 – Change Migration Strategy	136
Figure 4.6 – Retreat Migration Strategy	137
Figure 4.7 – Influence Migration Strategy	138
Figure 4.8 – Support Migration Strategy	138
Figure 4.9 – Escape Migration Strategy	139
Figure 4.10 –Leadership styles property spaces: types and sub-types	152
Figure 7.1 – Categories of Political Will expanded	266

## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

*The strength of your life is measured by the strength of your will.*

Henry Van Dyke

### 1.1 – Motivations and background

A poet of long ago, Sophocles, reflected on the individual passions of statesmen and of those who stood against them. The ruler and the follower – two sides of the same ‘leadership coin’ – develop loyalty and defiance, and as Creon, the king of Thebes, in *Antigone*, as claimed in his defence:

“Certainly no man can be fully known,  
Known in his soul, his will, his intellect,  
Until he is tested and has proved himself  
In statesmanship”<sup>1</sup>.

Obedience and trust are two of the main features of political leadership. Few lines like these are enough to render simplicity on the complexity of human themes and to inspire the work of political scientists. The soul and intellect of political leaders are one of the most investigated and debated themes in the history of political science. The huge diversity and plurality of approaches to the theme has produced hundreds of definitions and dozens of plausible explanations. However, exactly the opposite has happened with Political Will. In this case there is hardly one consensual definition, but there are frequent suggestions of its relevance for the study of political action and public policies. This thesis investigates the role of Political Will in leadership style formation, and contributes with a more precise conceptualization and suggests a tool to operationalize its dimensions.

It was perceptible that this work would come to grips with a wide range of uncertainties and conceptual mist that surrounded the extant literature that suggests plural approaches, contrasting paths and disparate outcomes.

A question – an unrelenting and unsettling one – must be the seed of the great part of the world’s scholarship. There must always be an uncertainty surrounding a particular subject that leads the researcher to, someday, dedicate a substantial part of his time

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<sup>1</sup> In *Sophocles: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Electra*, Translated by H.D.F. Kitto, Edited by Edith Hall, Oxford university Press, 1998

pursuing references, suggestions, methods, thoughts and intuitions, devoted to the pure joy of finding the smallest sign of an eventual answer. And that might be the biggest difference between relevant research and trivial enquiries: to pose the right question.

However, serious questions do not appear from nowhere as a mystical spark of inspiration, nor are they inevitably accepted for their self-evident qualities. Each has developed within a particular context, which involves a ‘conversation’ between the existent research and the researcher’s personal interest. In the present case this corresponded to a mix of distinct and, apparently, divergent interests: from human action to epistemology, from public policies to local governance, from political theory to leadership and political elites.

Two personal interests – apparently just in the vicinity of the subject of this thesis – can explain how we got absorbed by this theme: local governance and political elites. This concern about local governance could be explained through several intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. No doubt that personal interest and past work experience might have produced the motivational drive to direct my research attention to these issues about municipalities and their challenges. However, other contextual determinants must be added.

Cities perform a central role in human history and in political science studies. More than the etymological aspects of the word politics and its foundation on the Greek word Polis (*πολις*), which by itself constitutes a relevant argument in favour of urban studies and its important role, there are two historically notable aspects to take into account: the origins of the city and its contemporary growth. First of all we must evoke the mythological aspects of the birth of *Eridu*. This allegedly first important human gathering on the plains of Mesopotamia was the main theme of some of the first written material in human literature. The relevance of the city is such that the Assyrian-Babylonian epic of the creation of the world states that Eridu was first built, and only after mankind was created<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> “The holy house, the house of the gods, in the holy place had not yet been made;  
No reed had sprung up, no tree had been created.  
No brick had been laid, no building had been set up;  
No house had been erected, no city had been built;  
No city had been made, no creature had been created.  
Nippur had not been made, E-kur had not been built;  
Erech had not been created, E-ana had not been built;  
The Deep had not been created, Eridu had not been built;  
Of the holy house, the house of the gods, the habitation had not been made.

“Then was Eridu made”! To the ancient Sumerians the city became the centre of the world. Contemporary world is following this premise, as recent demographic data has shown: since the beginning of 2007, more than a half of the population of the globe lives in metropolitan areas. This ‘return’ to the origins sets new and much more complex challenges and requires new answers from political scientists.

What started to be, and to a certain extent inevitably became, a study on local political elites and their institutional influence over governance arrangements, grew into a more ample analysis of Political Will and political leadership. We became interested in the ‘origins’ of the first and the relations between both. Actually, most of the theories rely on structural or institutional explanations, claiming external factors as determining individual behaviour; or on personal trait, giving to the individual – by birth – special gifts that will give him the opportunity to be a certain kind of leader; or on pure interpretivist approaches, allowing contingency and randomness to make predictability an impossible endeavour.

Existing scholarship often highlights the importance of Political Will in order to understand action and policy initiatives, and suggests a relationship between Political Will and political leadership. So our two preliminary questions were very straightforward and seemed relatively obvious: what is Political Will, and how does it explain political leadership? The subsequent research question that shaped this thesis intended to address how a political leader selects and changes his way of acting.

From daily experience and from history we can learn there are large differences between individuals and their motivations, behaviours and choices. Although leadership theory is often constructed as if leaders are playing chess, in real world the pieces tend to move by themselves. However, there is significant scholarship on human behaviour that allows us to study regularities and to develop the necessary analytical instruments to get

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All lands were sea.

At that time there was a movement in the sea;

Then was Eridu made, and E-sagil was built,

E-sagil, where in the midst of the Deep the god Lugal-dul-azaga dwelleth;

The city of Babylon was built, and E-sagil was finished.

The gods, the Anunnaki, he created at one time;

The holy city, the dwelling, of their hearts' desire, they proclaimed supreme.

Marduk laid a reed upon the face of the waters,

He formed dust and poured it out beside the reed.

That he might cause the gods to dwell in the habitation of their hearts' desire,

He formed mankind.”

away from deterministic approaches (which would not explain different leadership styles within the same context), without falling in uncertainty and unpredictability. That is what we have tried to unveil with this thesis: one instrument – theoretically driven – that allows understanding and – eventually – previsibility about Political Will and leadership styles.

## **1.2 –Purpose and significance of the study**

Political leadership is a rather different field of knowledge than the classical leadership theories applied to organizational contexts like private businesses. The word ‘politics’ – regarding the wider and public sphere of action – introduces a completely new concern: the relationship with ‘others’. This requires from the leader the attainment of permanent legitimation and to exercise his power suitably. To understand this, one needs information about the processes that are implicated and about the reasons behind the action of the leader.

The working hypothesis of this thesis is that the research on political leadership, although not neglected by mainstream political studies, has not produced relevant tools for an overall understanding of the phenomenon and has delivered only partial explanations based on some of its aspects. This deficiency has especially become evident in the last decades, which have witnessed the growth in the number of democratic countries and the revival of more or less radical approaches to participatory and deliberative strategies to develop the ‘quality’ of democracy. This phenomenon has reintroduced the complex problem of the exercise of political leadership that has not had the appropriate consideration from political scientists and, even though its existence is accepted and recognizable, few efforts have been made in order to better understand its origins, different aspects and consequences. This thesis examines and discusses descriptive, analytical and normative arguments regarding the role of leadership in democratic societies. This approach on the theme seeks to provoke debate and to foster new research on the significance and function of leaders in democracies, while gathering the necessary theoretical evidence to pose new questions and give the necessary framework for a special focus on the ‘individuals in positions of headship’.

The thesis (particularly in its constitutive chapters) works on two levels. First, it aims to conceptualize Political Will, departing from relevant scholarship on human action,

motivation and intentionality, particularly with a focus on *praxeology* and *phenomenology*. Second, it explores the possibilities given by its operationalization in terms of understanding leadership styles.

This research takes into account both the scope and consequences of the dispersal of the leadership role in contemporary democracies; a subject that has been rather neglected by a literature mostly concerned with the exercise of executive power. In assessing the effects of leadership dispersal and, at the same time, the consequences of the personalisation of politics, with their apparently opposite directions, we have justified the pertinence of this contemporary theme. The public leadership role of politicians needs from researchers the development of tools that allows us to understand what drives different ways of performing it, enhances our appreciation of the complexity of political leadership, allow us to assess the consequences of each leadership style and deepens our knowledge on human behaviour. Overall, the thesis tries to advance a new approach on political leadership and claims scholarship should revive the issue.

Although Political Will is often characterized as dichotomical – either it is present or absent – such a simplistic approach hides countless aspects of complexity and levels of intensity. Common sense and mainstream research go together when arguing that Political Will is relevant to explain political action and the fact that political leaders possess it. This necessary and irrefutable prediction – as leadership requires an expression of action and this occurs because an individual has the will to do it – does not say much of the way this takes place and how different outcomes can happen. In fact, they are particularly accurate when claiming the opposite: if nothing happens it is because it – someone – lacked Political Will. However, beyond this unanimity there is little clarity. It is typically discussed as if the leader was static – and also binary – and once one can determine the presence or absence of Political Will, it can be treated as a constant. The analytic vulnerabilities it reveals and the consequent misinterpretations it allows, besides the modest contribution it gives to the improvement leadership studies, do not permit variability in leader's behaviour and excludes opportunities to understand leadership style as an intentional expression of the individuals we are studying. This thesis aims to develop a concept of Political Will, distinguishing some of its most common usages, and allowing its operationalization. This establishes a framework that provides the necessary skeleton to support diverse strategies of action and different resulting leadership styles.



The central idea of this thesis is that Political Will is the result of the content of the leader's intent to act, his context perceptions, and sense of political autonomy and efficacy. This argument considers that the *political action* of the leader discloses a particular *style of leadership* that, as we will explain, derives from his *intention* and sensed *possibilities*. In order to explain this relationship between leadership and Political Will, we will identify the challenges of contemporary governance, focusing on leadership roles and styles, and advance with a new framework that attempts to enclose and explain different leadership styles. These will be presented as a consequence of contextual, constitutional and personal constraints, but mediated by Political Will. Therefore, we intend to advance an answer to two interlocked questions: what drives Political Will and what creates the disposition of an individual to become a certain type of leader?

Developing a better understanding of what Political Will entails may help efforts to explain political leaders, governance arrangements and the engagement of different agents in the polity.

Vergil's Georgics reminds: '*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*' [Happy is he who comes to know the causes of things]. Fortunately, this venture started by claiming some certainties, and ended certain of many questions. Of course one cannot consider himself to know the causes of things, but, certainly, one can be assured of having made an effort to, and might have provided a small glimpse of an eventual path to it.

### 1.3 – Methodology and research design

This is a thesis about political leaders: who they are, what they do and why they do it. Mostly because what they do influences the world we live in. It might be expected when studying leadership that we would use some of the preferred methods of those who study personal characteristics and behaviours, drawing on other fields of knowledge. In fact, we will approach these issues through the lenses of political science, but particularly in debt with the relevant stock of knowledge that philosophy, economics and anthropology possess, especially when the person is the focus, when human action is at stake and individual choices are being studied. These plural angles of analysis of human activity allow us to focus on political leadership with an integrated and pluridisciplinary perspective.

We have departed from the acknowledgement of the immense challenges that contemporary governance and democratic societies are facing, which ineluctably demands ‘new answers’ from political leaders. How do they perform and what drive their style of leadership were two of the initial questions that shaped the content of this study. Our research question considers the complexity of these issues and asks: how does a leader select and change his way of acting?

This thesis claims that *political leadership styles articulate a choice of action that results from the Political Will of a leader, which is determined by his intention and his discerned possibilities to act.*

We argue that variation in concepts and origins of political leadership is a central and recurring theme in political science, and that such variance is unlikely to disappear, in spite of the efforts to provide catch-all metaphors of the phenomenon and of the prophets who foresee the convergence to a futuristic and holistic definition. Most of the basic ideas about the theme have a millenary history and the main task is to grasp its essential characteristics, based on a more complete comprehension of human action.

The thesis relies on relevant contributions from philosophy and economics, namely *phenomenology* and *praxeology*, to address the theme of Political Will and to advance a way of conceptualizing it. It also uses Aaron Widavsky’s Grid-group Theory to get an analytic purchase on a number of themes, including the analysis of the patterns of authority, the exploration of strategies of action, the discussion of the impacts of leadership, and the possibilities of style adaptation and change.

Grid and Group are fundamental to Political Will. After all, this debate on the exercise of political leadership has concerned the extent to which it is acceptable to rule based on strict prescriptions or on a manoeuvrable set of conventions. Grid denotes the intensity of these rules and explains the level of openness of individual negotiation. Similarly, the enduring issue of leader / follower relations, and the origins of authority and legitimacy confer a relevant role to the Group dimension. It is at the core of such debates about how autonomous or how accountable is a political leader, given the level of relevance that group membership has to him.

To put the Grid and Group dimensions together is to establish how much life is controlled by conventions and how much individual choice is constrained by group choice. By combining them it is possible to identify a plural but limited range of basic ‘ways of

life' that helps to disclose the content of beliefs and values shared by similar types of leaders.

Grid-group Theory is by no means the only attempt to offer a frame to identify different forms of individual worldviews. However, it offers a powerful analytical tool that allows an overall framework of heuristics to operationalize *intention* and *possibility*. It is used here as a point of departure rather than a closed answer to our questions, and it generates a typology of leadership styles that we believe is more complete and inclusive.

Therefore, the typological theory we advance provides a plural and rich representation of leadership styles as a consequence of Political Will, allowing contingent and selective explanations. It provides not only the hypotheses on how and under what conditions the dimensions of Political Will operate together, but also what configurations of produced effects are expectable. These conjunctions are called 'types', and result from a limited number of different combinations of the independent variables. These result on a 'picture' of different 'property spaces'. The typological theory we attempt to develop specifies the pathways through which different aspects of the Political Will dimensions relate to each other, and provide the subsequent expected outcomes, which in our case represent diverse styles of political leadership.

Our typological theory resulted from a theory-based deducted map of property spaces, after defining the base-concept and its dimensions, their operationalization and the types they constitute given their plausible configurations. We have, additionally, decided to search for further refinement and eventual adjustments relying on a small number of compared case-studies. Therefore, in order to assess the degree to which the content of the leader's intentions and of his different perceptions have an influence over Political Will and ultimately over leadership styles, it has been decided to conduct a comparative study with different Mayors of Portuguese municipalities. Assessing causal mechanisms and comparing them constitutes a powerful conceptual mechanism that fixes attention upon the few attributes being compared. We used a multiple case study design, with a limited number of cases, in order to learn about significant features of the phenomenon and how it varies under similar circumstances. The document analysis, leader's interviews and focus groups allowed us to assemble information, with triangulation being guaranteed through this multiple sources of data.

The thick description of situations and agents that we aimed for, given the fact that we attributed relevance to the consequence of meanings in shaping actions, required methods that provided depth and nuance, and that allowed political leaders to explain their meanings, beliefs and preferences. The qualitative data gathered for subsequent analysis demanded a particular attention to validity and reliability when scheming the research design. In addition, data explication was done through a systematic method of thematic analysis, which delivered the necessary coherence between analysis, methodology and our epistemological standpoint.

### **1.4 - Outline of the thesis**

The thesis comprises of seven chapters. In chapter one an introduction is done to the outline of the study problem, its background, and its purpose and significance.

In chapter two, the plurality of approaches to the theme of political leadership is addressed, particularly focused on its distinctive features. The most illustrative literature will be reviewed and the characteristics of democratic governance will also be analyzed, with a special focus on the dispersal and personalization of leadership. This is followed by an overview of the most noteworthy theories on the theme and a claim for the need of concept coherence, given the multiplicity of the existent standpoints. Finally, we concentrate on leadership styles, with a particular attention on the local governance context, and propose an outline of the communalities that are present in the available explanations about the origins of these styles. This way we will justify the relevance of understanding Political Will as an unavoidable concept.

In chapter three, this relation is deepened and the relevance of Political Will is underlined. Human action and intentionality are addressed with particular attention in this chapter, as well as the motivational drivers for action, in order to advance an interpretation of Political Will that allows an integration of the concepts disputed within the structure-agency debate; and, through an agent-centered phenomenological approach, deliver a new conceptualization. Its explanatory potential and limits are also assessed and, finally, we claim that Political Will – and its dimensions of *intention* and *possibility* – really matters to understand political leadership styles.

Chapter four is dedicated to the operationalization of these two dimensions. For this, we present Grid-group Theory and explain its appropriateness. Four standard property spaces – representing four types of leadership styles – result from a preliminary approach to this process. Afterwards, and because *intention* and *possibility* operate together and simultaneously, we advance on the analysis and suggest some plausible heuristical conflicts to happen and describe which consequences, strategies and type migrations are conceivable. It is by assuming this *grid-group dynamics* that an inclusive and more complete set of resulting property spaces is possible. It renders fourteen different types of leadership styles and sixty different predictable causal paths that result from the expected *migration strategies*.

The *plausibility probes* through case-studies' analysis designed to provide improvements to our theoretical claims and the associated research design are presented, discussed and justified in chapter five. After some preliminary epistemological and methodological stances we provide the conceptual framework that will allow us to address the cases we selected for research purposes: Portuguese Mayors. Five research hypotheses are presented, and the processes of sampling, data collection, operationalization and data explication constitute the last part of this chapter.

The sixth chapter, after a contextualization of the Portuguese local governance main features, presents the findings from the five case studies and discusses the probable impact and congruence of each with the theoretical claims we previously presented. The communalities of the causal mechanisms related to the function of *intention* and *possibility* as the dimensions of Political Will and their role in explaining different leadership styles are, finally, addressed.

The last chapter attempts to deliver some concluding remarks about our research question and discusses the pertinence of the thesis. It also advances some repercussions, mainly in the public policies field of research, and suggests a number of different and necessary paths for further work.

## CHAPTER II – THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

*Whether a man is burdened by power or enjoys power; whether he is trapped by responsibility or made free by it; whether he is moved by other people and outer forces or moves them - this is of the essence of leadership.*

Theodore H. White, 'The Making of the President', 1960

### 2.1 – Setting the scene: what is political leadership?

Stories of power and political leadership are common groundwork for writers throughout literature history: from Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* to Orwell's *Animal Farm*, literature is impregnated with this theme and its singularities. Leaders are object of an immense admiration, due to the ability of great men to change the world surrounding them, or to the capacity of evil individuals to whom command is a natural gift and followers a bendable mass. Seen as an art, or more recently in history as a science, leadership has always been an object of examination by thinkers, artists, writers, and researchers.

There is something of the child pure delight about this theme that gives us the urge to try to understand it. It must have value if it is appealing. *The Brothers Karamazov* from Fyodor Dostoevsky advanced one explanation to why leadership is so important: "There are three powers, only three powers on earth, capable of conquering and holding captive forever the conscience of these feeble rebels, for their own happiness – these powers are miracle, mystery, and authority". The possibility to provide all the three at the same time is only achievable by those able to grasp the immense complexity of the art of leadership. The effective leader can offer the *miracle* of bending situation in favour of his own success or of others, and, at the same time, exert *authority* over followers, sometimes under a veil of *mystery* which allows him to maintain an aura of absolute power, only available to great men.

However this results from a literary perspective – often closer to our most common and uncomplicated understanding about political leaders – and it deserves more accurate, systematic and cautious investigation, with solid theoretical and methodological instruments.

Political leadership is a complex concept with no universal definition. Political scientists usually define leadership accordingly to their own perceptions of the issue and depending on the aspects they are more interested in. As a result, political science has hardly progressed to a point where it could be identified a consensual conceptualization and treatment of leadership (Yukl, 2002; Peele, 2005). Every so often it becomes an abstraction – a concept whose meaning is socially constructed and, therefore, contested. It is also related to other concepts, such as ‘influence’, ‘power’ and ‘authority’, which contributes to the large array of competing definitions of leadership – some argue there are thousands (Rost, 1991: 37-95).

The complexity of the definition is aggravated by the multi-arena context of actions in which leaders move around. The exercise of political leadership is done in one or more different environments and often done simultaneously. As Hockin has noted: “even if one definition of leadership were chosen [...] the operational meaning of the definition would change depending on the context in which leadership would be exercised” (Hockin, 1977: ix). Additionally, political leadership conceptualization is highly dependent on the manner in which leaders exercise it, therefore setting high demands on the way scholarship focuses its attention on the analysis of leadership styles.

Besides its context and styles dependency, political leadership bears – in its essence – the characteristics of mysterious phenomena. For instance, for Max Weber, it entails both calculation and risk. Since political means, ends and consequences very often do not match one another – as intended – it requires an “active mediation of fate” and an “unpredictable enterprise” (Gane, 1997). Leadership can only be achieved through responsibility and commitment, for “Politics... without belief is impossible” (Mayer 1950, cit. Gane 1997). This combination of passion and responsibility, which a political leader must possess, brings about a concept difficult to unbundle. As correct as Weber’s – and these Weberian inspired – assumptions can be, leadership “is not a holistic phenomenon which can be reduced to primary properties such as authority or charisma” (Cerny, 1988). However, it is not a mystical or mysterious thing (Kotter, 1990): as useful as this properties of personal leadership can be, they are the result of complex causes that raise even more questions.

Normative attempts to define leadership, although impossible to avoid, bear the weight of producing diverse and paradoxical results: from the great potential of Neustadt’s (1976) ‘power of persuasion’ in democratic governance to its perversion in tyranny and



authoritarianism. The study of political leadership must, therefore, be made “in a way which is susceptible to both historical and comparative analysis” (Cerny, 1988). Despite the fact it is one of the most intuitively understood phenomena in politics – common sense easily identifies leaders and leadership roles – it is often addressed as a complex multidimensional experience constrained by several external social structures. Therefore, the concept of political leadership is particularly difficult to define, since it is often presented as dependent on institutional, historical and cultural contexts (Blondel, 1987; Wildavsky, 1989).

### *Power and authority*

As a natural legacy of the military context, one could be led to consider leadership as command, interpreted as ‘hard power’ given by hierarchic, predetermined and strict institutional structures. However, an overall guiding definition of political leadership for research purposes – even though accepting that context matters – must offer a dispassionate and overarching approach to the phenomenon, as an effort to include a complex set of historical and cultural contexts, and all forms of both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ powers (Nye, 2008). More unbiased definitions should include the general idea of leadership as *the power to exercise power*. Rather than considering straightforwardly the ‘exercise of power’, we prefer to consider it as the ‘capacity and possibility to exercise power over others and situations’.

One must agree that power is equally elusive concept and does not introduce any operational advantage when explaining political leadership’s concept. However, comparatively, this has been a well documented, discussed and analysed concept throughout human history. Power, as Max Weber’s now canonical definition states, results from “the probability that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance”. This exercise of control over others is highly dependent on the leader’s skill to accomplish it and on the followers’ acquiescence – in fact, the way to attain an objective is often through other’s actions. Therefore one must consider both dimensions of power: the leader’s capacity and the follower’s consent. In the first case, as Bertrand Russell once argued, “Men like power so long as they believe in their own competence to handle the business in question, but when they know themselves incompetent they prefer to follow a leader” (Russell, 2004[1938]: 9). A leader must, then,



select “a particular course of action and then in some way gets others to go along; or more subtly, the leader encourages the led to choose the course that the group will follow” (Kellerman, 2004: xiii). These strategies chosen by leaders in order to be successful set what we will subsequently call ‘leadership styles’.

The second dimension of power assumes that followers matter, considering that leaders are, to some extent, follower-led. Whether individuals follow by own commitment, instinct, or through socialization, the importance of followership has been significantly stressed in recent literature (Hollander, 1993; Kellerman, 2008).

Power sets, therefore, an asymmetrical relation between individuals who exert it and those who follow its ‘guidelines’. This interpretation of power considers followers as holders of some extent of ‘subordination qualities’. Machiavelli used the same argument when arguing that a Prince, although having strength, needs the favour and benevolence of the people to keep in power. This feature is, naturally, strongly emphasized in democratic systems.

Even though power is significant in order to understand leadership, one must consider that not all powerful people are able to lead. In fact, although power is inseparable from the exercise of leadership, both concepts have disparate relations: political leadership implies holding a certain ‘amount of power’, but the opposite is not true – it is possible to have power (for instance, in hierarchical relations) without being a leader. In this case one can follow Marcus Tullius Cicero’s advice – in his “Speech against Piso” – to consider those things one cannot attain by *power* that are accomplished by *authority*. This distinction between both concepts, present in Roman law, is exemplified by another statement by Cicero: “power is hold by the people, but authority is hold by the Senate”. The Latin phrase *senatus populusque romanus*, which meant *the Senate and the Roman People*, translated this relation between both concepts: the senators had a positional authority and the people had power. Thus, authority needs to be ascribed by a set of norms or recognized by other individuals, as contemporary liberal democracies do through constitutions and laws. Therefore, followers have a certain degree of power to set constraints on leaders, to the most extreme limit set by the historical anecdote of the French revolutionary Comte de Mirabeau, who once said, “there goes the mob, and I must follow them, for I am their leader”.

*An individual capacity*

Although ‘having the authority to exercise power in order to influence the course of actions’ presents itself as a more complete picture of the setting needed for political leadership, one still needs to consider that having the authority – as having power – does not necessary mean to be a leader. So, an individual can have the power and the authority to lead but he still needs something else to be considered a political leader. If *authority* is given by rules, norms, institutional settings or contextual and historical determinants, it means it rests on *others’* agreement or submission. On the other hand *power* is highly dependent on the instruments, tools and skills available, as well as the contextual setting that allows or prevents it from being exercised. Political leadership must, as a consequence, result from accomplishing the needed preconditions for both *authority* and *power* – external and internal, or contextual and individual requirements. Therefore, there is also a need for assessing the ‘capacity to be a leader’.

A definition of political leadership needs to aggregate these considerations, arguing that it is the ‘capacity to exercise power over others and situations’. Although formal powers and authority given to individuals in office can rarely change during several years, one can identify different ‘ways’ of using it – different strategies to attain political objectives. Therefore, leader’s actions must depend also on the individuals who hold that position. On the other hand, the same individual can succeed in one context and fail in another (even though the latter allows him more opportunities and scope to exercise power). Context is also an important feature to take into account when assessing leadership styles.

Leadership results from this interactive aptitude in which the leader is permanently judging his role, the context, the chosen strategy and future changes. Additionally his success depends on the quality and accuracy of the style of leadership chosen. How does he exercise power, through which strategy, who is involved and which tools are used, are the decisive questions to understand contemporary political leadership. Even more decisive is the understanding of the mechanism that directs the political leader to adopt a particular style.

## **2.2 - Political leadership in democratic societies**

Political leadership is essentially the exercise of seeking consent rather than imposing coercion. This has been the common understanding since Plato's early influential insights in the 'Republic', where he addressed the needed characteristics and personal virtues of the ruler. Machiavelli followed this tradition and his 'Prince' also had a set of personal merits which enabled him to succeed. We can also include Thomas Hobbes's 'Leviathan' under the same labelling since he focused on the human passions that could induce leaders to compromise order and peace.

This theme has originated two main adversary approaches: the classical one, which focused on the personality traits of influential and 'great men'; and the contemporary one, following the interests of a more sociological understanding of the exercise of leadership. The first case stimulated examples as Rousseau's Great Legislator, Nietzsche's Superman, and the influential Weberian Charismatic Leader – gifted with an extraordinary quality that enables him to gather followers around him or around a particular objective. Machiavelli started this 'science of leadership' looking at its core as an expression of an artistic ability, akin to an innate talent. On the other hand, the 'sociological' approach claimed that Weber devaluated the role of followers and of the context in which leadership was exercised, arguing an important role for culture and values as key legitimating factors. Accordingly, leadership is seen as more of a consequence of an interaction between the individual and his context, than a purely individualistic approach to human qualities. This perspective is egalitarian in its assumptions, and ultimately recognizes that everyone has the possibility of attaining the position of a leader. This normative – almost creed – approach might help explaining why contemporary political science has been reluctant to discuss the relevance of political leadership, since it represents two significant anathemas on the democratic 'faith': it is a deviation from the ideal of autonomy, as followers are compelled to go behind others; and it leads to inequality, or at least to social differentiation between the one with power and all the others.

If we added the assumed fact which argues that leaders are also able to 'bend' the context and their followers, rather than being mere products of their environment, one must agree that, more than simple mirrors of external constraints, leaders combine several characteristics that allow them to produce consent around his commanding voice.

An egalitarian bias must have had some influence on the indifference around this theme, as it avoided considering the influence of individuals with the necessary political strength to offer them a determinant role on the public domain. This would mean having the world under the influence of unrestricted and contingencial forces that were able to shape events and, consequently, set unpredictable freedom for political agents. This eventual high degree of contingency would imply the erosion of the tools and theories available to political science, which might have led to its lack of concern with this theme. However, its existence – and persistence – with undisputable high visibility of political leaders turns it into an uncomfortable situation and asks for further analysis and systematic interest from social sciences.

*Democracies survive its leaders*

Political leadership has been a mistreated subject in contemporary social sciences, albeit its relevance in human life.

“It is not wise to expect much of political leadership, especially in a democracy” (Firlie, 1968: 58). Statements like this are highly expectable to be found in contemporary literature on political leadership. In fact strong leadership is often associated with weak democracies, and, on the other hand, a ‘good democrat’ seems to be incompatible with the exercise of leadership. Political leadership is, apparently, in conflict with democracy’s egalitarian ethos. Democracy will, therefore, never sit easily alongside leadership, and evenly can develop an antipathy to its strongest expressions. However, and even because of this, political science should not have been blind to this phenomenon, and must escape from any gridlocks provided by faith in political equality driven by democracy. Science allows and deserves this unbiased and dispassionate look. This neglect of the theme needs to be corrected as it sets an important deficiency in our knowledge of the way world functions.

Although the important contribution of the groundwork of Selznick (1957), Barnard (1968) and Burns (1978), much of the discussion has a business-centred, organizational or biographical approach. The last thirty years have been particularly prolific in literature on the theme (cf. Femia *et al*, 2009:4 §6), mostly following the same ‘pessimistic’ path of advocating the need for leadership *even though* living in liberal democracies.

This resistance to leadership rested on a variety of grounds, as claimed by Schlesinger:

“on ideological grounds – because this emphasis has seemed to imply that some men should lead and others should follow, a proposition which clashes with the traditional democratic commitment to equality and to majoritarianism... on moral grounds – because it has seemed to overlook the democratic conviction that power corrupts... on emotional grounds – because it irritates that populist strain in democracy which often includes an envy of superior persons” (Schlesinger, 1982: 4)

Probably its existence in democratic societies is an uncomfortable fact because it redirects our attention to the general distrust towards politicians, and might comprise the argument that leadership in democracies must have something antidemocratic about it, when the rule of law is menaced by the rule of some men. More democracy implies more suspicion towards power (cf. Warren, 1999). This distrust can be understood as a ‘power of prevention’ (Jouvenel, 1966) which gives authorization to different forms of veto to prevent excessive power from leaders. Nonetheless researchers argue that leadership is decisive to good governance and that it needs powerful and creative figures that give the necessary direction to policymaking (John and Cole, 1999).

Two dominant strands of argumentation are common: one emphasizes the importance of effective leadership, and the other highlights the involvement of the community. Although apparently diverse, its complementarity is possible and needed if governance mechanisms are to work properly (Haus and Heinelt, 2005).

#### *Leaders survive democracies*

Several authors, with Karl Popper amongst the most relevant ones, felt the necessity to tackle with the ‘problem’ of political leadership. This hostility was inflamed by European’s twentieth century examples of the impact of firm leaders like Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Franco, and Salazar. Popper disputes Plato’s question of who should rule since, as he argues, the question itself leads to answers – dangerous – as Plato’s. In “The Open Society and its Enemies”, Popper expresses this belief:

“[...] Plato created a lasting confusion in political philosophy... It is clear that once the question ‘Who should rule?’ is asked, it is hard to avoid some such reply as ‘the best’ or ‘the wisest’ or ‘the born leader’ or ‘he who masters the art of ruling’ (or perhaps, ‘The General Will’ or ‘The master Race’ or ‘The industrial Workers’ or ‘The People’). But such a reply, convincing as it sounds – for who would advocate the rule of ‘the worst’ or ‘the greatest fool’ or ‘the born slave’? – is... quite useless” (Popper, 1945: 120).

The author does not intend to exclude the exercise of leadership in contemporary politics, since – as he admits – it is necessary. However, his unease is addressed to the inevitability of men in leadership position acquiring more power and influence, beyond control. Therefore the correct question – obviously different from Plato’s – would be “how can we organize political institutions so as to minimize the damage that bad rulers can cause?” (ibidem: 121). Thus, political leadership becomes a ‘problem’ one needs to control: a necessary evil of democracies whose main merits is the possibility of removing leaders from power without bloodshed.

An understandable problem, one must admit also from the perspective of Isaiah Berlin, since the extent of the exercise of the leader’s power, particularly under the State’s institutional umbrella could lead to uncontrollable authority. His focus on political leadership derives from his opposition to determinism in history, which is contradicted by political leader’s agency, rejecting the idea that “greatness is a romantic illusion – a vulgar notion exploited by politicians or propagandists, and one which a deeper study of facts will always dispel” (Berlin, 1980: 32). His recognition of the role played by political leaders in shaping history defies all the scholarship approaches against political ‘greatness’:

“A great man need not be morally good, or upright, or kind, or sensitive, or delightful, or possess artistic or scientific talent. To call someone a great man is to claim that he has intentionally taken (or perhaps could have taken) a large step, one far beyond the normal capacities of men, in satisfying, or materially affecting, central human interests” (idem: 32)

Isaiah Berlin, particularly on ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox’, offers a distinction between those leaders (1) who see life as simple dichotomies, easily understandable and tractable, promoting intense followership and even fanatical idealism, resembling the Weberian charismatic one, and the leader (2) to whom an intelligible pattern can be found and action can be taken, even when the world is seen as a complex composite of events. The first type, prone to offer utopian solutions, tend to “attract their followers by the intensity and purity of their mind, by their fearless and unbending character, by the simplicity and nobility of the central principle to which they dedicate all that they have, by the very fact that they impose some pattern so clear” (Berlin, 1953: 186). The second type is flexible and adaptable to the contingency of the political context, being aware of the complexity of the world but still able to understand and offer a coherent path.

A dispassionate assessment of political leadership – as this one – re-centres our analysis: from the qualities of particular individuals, his intentions, perspectives and preferences, to the way he performs his role.

#### *Who is the political leader*

Weber focused on Plato’s fundamental question of ‘who should rule’, therefore examining the qualities and abilities of the ideal leader. Leadership occupies a central place on the author’s rationale, being fundamental for an understanding of politics. Again the theme of power is what drove Weber’s attention, particularly as it derived from the ‘monopoly of legitimate physical violence’ allowed to modern states. Therefore, as Weber claims, “anyone engaged in politics is striving for power, either power as a means to attain other goals (which may be ideal or selfish), or power for its own sake, which is to say, in order to enjoy the feeling of prestige given by power” (Weber, 1994: 310-311).

This ‘great men’ approach to political history was severely undermined by theorists to whom social events were better explained by exogenous powerful forces which shaped the context in which one acts, and ultimately diminishes individual capacity to ‘bend’ it. Authors like Hegel, Marx and Durkheim saw leadership as transmission belts of these controlling social forces. This structuralist thinking on social causation undermined an agency approach to political leadership, which diluted its explanatory significance. However, the example of Political Psychology – a growing field of research in Political



Science (‘t Hart, 2010) – sets another perspective, as argued by Donald Searind and Marco Steenbergen:

“Political psychologists reject such one-directional models where the behaviour of leaders is determined by institutional settings. In their view, institutions circumscribe behaviour but do not dictate it. Structure and agency are interdependent, not institution-determined. And their interdependence is negotiated (and can be manipulated) by the political actors involved” (Searind and Steenbergen, 2009: 134).

Much of the extant literature on political leadership still follows the ‘great men’ approach, and is mainly focused on figures like Alexander the Great, Cesar, Napoleon, Stalin and Hitler – this does not inform much about its processes under liberal democracies. In fact, although relevant as it may look like to the research objective of bringing back the spotlights on political leaders, this perspective is not helpful when one intends to understand what is the specific nature and distinctiveness of contemporary political leadership. The smaller quantity of scholarship done within this particular context is mostly comparative, and often focused on particular historical individuals (Jones, 1989; Elgie, 1995).

The so-called ‘elitist’ theory of democracy – with Pareto, Mosca and Schumpeter – brought the issue back to the attention of political thought during the twentieth century. Although challenged by strong and militant ‘anti-elitists’ such as Carole Pateman (1970), it allowed going beyond what Schumpeter called the classical approach to democracy as the self-rule of people, which gave leadership a distrustful connotation.

Weber’s *Führerdemokratie* – leader democracy – was developed as a concept during the birth of the professionalization of politics, the spread of bureaucracies and the growth of mass democracies, during the early twentieth-century. Weber argued that charismatic leaders were expected to dominate over political representatives, bureaucratic professionals and political parties. This depiction resembles not only to the above-mentioned ‘elitist’ theory, but especially to current trends in democracies. One of their key features is the ascendancy of assertive leaders, to whom voters look when deciding in which party to vote (Pakulski and Higley, 2008).



One must admit that the personal factor on the equation of leadership is not as relevant as it was in absolutist or oligarchic forms of government, particularly when we examine liberal democracies where the main concern is to balance the power of those with formal institutional authority. In fact, controlling power has been the underlying apprehension of those who analyse constitutional arrangements. However, the relevance of political leadership is not confined to the extent of personal rule. One does not need to go all the way with Carnes Lord when arguing that “the theory of democracy tells us the people rule. In practice, we have leaders who rule the people in a manner not altogether different from the princes and potentates of times past” (Lord, 2003: xi), but it remains true that even in strongly controlled democracies, with tight systems of checks and balances, political leadership still makes a difference.

#### *Personalization of politics*

Exercising leadership is a fundamental form of political agency even in contemporary democracies. Political leaders have an important role in creating alternatives and displaying opportunities to choose between rival strategies for the public realm, particularly if one considers how limited is collective action based on citizens’ preferences (as shown by Arrow’s voters paradox and Downs’ focus on collective ignorance). This shift from looking at democracy as presenting the opportunity to aggregate citizens’ preferences to a participated way of selecting leaders represents a major change in the analysis of the role of political leadership. More than *responsive* to situations and individuals, this meant leaders are *responsible*; political representation comprehends the exercise of top-down *guidance and influence*, rather than simple *mirroring* of preferences and interests; the political process rests on *persuasion* more than *bargaining*; political motivation and action derive from *will*, rather than collective negotiation and consensus.

The ever growing complexity of contemporary governance, menaced by incomplete information for decision, and reinforced by multi-level and multi-organizational agents competing in the public arena, restores an important role to be played by political leaders. In essence, political leadership is agency, since, as Lewis Edinger claims:

“[...] he is loved, admired, respected or feared, because he can coerce, persuade or manipulate group members, because he can offer psychic as

well as material rewards and punishments, or because compliance with his wishes is sanctioned by habit, traditional or legal-rational behaviour norms” (Edinger, 1967: 5).

Accordingly, a prominent feature of contemporary politics has been the ‘personalization of politics’ (Karvonen, 2010) – the role of politicians as individuals is strengthened as a way of determining how people view and express their preferences. As Bernard Manin claims:

“People vote differently from one election to another, depending on the particular persons competing for their vote. Voters tend increasingly to vote for a person and no longer for a party or a platform. This phenomenon marks a departure from what was considered normal voting behaviour under representative democracy [...]. Analysts have long observed that there is a tendency towards the personalization of power in democratic countries” (Manin, 1997: 219).

While parties were seen as expressions of preferences and choices, as a function of citizens’ affiliation to such groups (Mair, 2006: 371), with the weakening of these structures, collective loyalties and identities were undermined. The subsequent ‘personalization’ of politics is a consequence of a process of individualisation of social life, technological modernization, changes in social structures, and media becoming the central channel of political information (Karvonen, 2010: 4).

Following Rahat and Sheafer’s (2007), McAllister’s (2007) and Kaase’s (1994) research, Lauri Karvonen presents a set of changes that result from this process: (1) institutions stress individual politicians rather than collectivities; (2) electoral campaigns and propaganda are increasingly centred on individual candidates; (3) politics is perceived as a competition between leaders, more than organized collective interests; (4) political preferences and choices are formed mainly on the basis of their evaluation of individual political actors; (5) these choices may decide the outcome of elections, and ultimately (6) “power relationships in politics and society may come to be decided on the basis of the individual characteristics of politicians” (Karvonen, 2010: 5).

As John Horton (2009, 20-27) reminded, neglecting the theme has some important consequences. The first is the indifference towards the exercise of political power. Power, as seen before, is also an integral part of the exercise of leadership and must, therefore, be taken into account, as it is a particularly sensitive theme under democratic regimes. Secondly, it leads to a devaluation of politicians, which seems to conflict with the perspective of democracy requiring good leadership if it is to function effectively.

### *The functions of political leaders*

Is this relationship between civic participation and the effectiveness of the representation system through political leaders possible? As Lindblom (1965) early work stated, effective governance is generated through citizens' participation. It helps to overcome implementation problems and contributes to legitimate action (Heinelt, 2002). Also Jessop (2002) assumes that participation counter balances eventual failures of hierarchical, top-down leadership. This difficult equilibrium can be reinforced by improving accountability in the democratic process and ascribing and defining leaders' roles (Getimis and Heinelt, 2004).

In a democratic society, three broad political leadership functions have been identified (Elcock, 2001; Fenwick, Elcock and McMillan, 2006): (1) *Governing* as a way to improve coordination and to provide strategic leadership - leaders must be capable of generating policy ideas through negotiation and communicating them through the organization; (2) *Governance* as the result of the complexity of the surrounding context of government - government authorities with their wide range of functions are expected to relate with other public authorities and private organization, developing partnerships and networks of policy delivery and deliberation; and (3) *Allegiance* as the commitment towards their supporters. In fact, "leaders must ensure their survival" (Elcock, 2000). The problem of the allegiance role is that leaders must ensure that they keep their formal position without jeopardizing their vision for the organization. This Machiavellian temptation might transform a leader into a mere manager of expectations and citizens' preferences, undermining the very essence of leadership. That is why "achieving the vision, the programme, the manifesto requires [...] that leaders act in ways that will render them at least temporarily unpopular" (Elcock, 2000).

Although several different roles are expected from democratic leaders, according to the political environment in which they are operating, the four main ones are: maintaining organization cohesion; representing, defending and gaining support from the external environment for the organization; adapting the organization to the changing needs of the context; and defining its tasks and directing it to achieve its ends (Isaac-Henry, 2003).

The move to a leader-centred democracy implies, first of all, that political theory and research must concentrate on leaders, offering a better portrait of contemporary politics. On the other hand, leadership studies must be released from their disproportionate focus on ‘great men’ and from a certain kind of ‘leader cult’. This will allow a better understanding of the ‘normal’ political realm of contemporary democracies. It must produce new answers to the new challenges of governance, particularly identifying the role of political leaders in these complex political contexts, where several other actors are called into action, and multilevel and multi-territorialized public and private organizations take part on the public policy process. Finally, political science must offer unbiased approaches to the role of political leaders in democracies, particularly offering the framework which will allow understanding their strategies, their power to influence, their motivations, and their constraints.

### **2.3 – What differentiates political leadership?**

Literature on leadership with a public sector focus, and particularly within the frame of political leadership, is just a fraction of that in the private sector. The first main question which needs to be answered is to what extent political leadership possesses different characteristics when compared to other kinds of leadership, like business or military, for instance.

On an effort to provide understanding about public leadership, Paul’t Hart and John Uhr consciously and interestingly provided an introduction explaining why the book they were editing was organized regarding three main key questions: leadership as an object of study, as a democratic design issue and as a solution and a problem (’t Hart and Uhr, 2008: 1-2). This option, more than a mere editor’s perspective, unveils the main dimensions of contemporary research approaches to the theme. The first intends to provide an answer to what is political leadership, how it is differentiated from other kinds, and how can it be

conceptualized. The second approach seeks effectiveness, particularly through presenting which mechanisms are at stake in democratic contexts that provide leadership with a specific role, and – vice-versa – which is the role of political leadership in providing effectiveness to democratic processes. The third perspective is focused on the problems political leadership faces in contemporary governance (how it can adapt, which style is more effective), and also how can political leadership be considered as a problem in such contexts (particularly regarding accountability and legitimacy issues).

Leadership is a paradoxical phenomenon: it is admired but controversial, respected and often ridiculed, explained but uncertain, relevant, yet blamed by many. This seems to be particularly true when it is about *political* leadership. It encompasses all those activities and interactions between individuals, which are taking place due to a particular setting of power, legitimacy or influence gap between them. The distinctive functions performed by those who exercise leadership, as claimed by ‘t Hart and Uhr, are needed “in order for a polity to govern itself effectively and democratically, [and] are not performed spontaneously by a polity’s public institutions, organizations and routines” (idem: 3). There is always an answer to the classic question of “who governs?” – another relevant concern of scholarship. The role of ‘those who govern’ provides answers to the importance of political leadership in supplying guidance and orientation to the polity.

As we have seen before, the nature of the leadership task sets new problems in the political science literature. Several models have been produced do satisfy the need to explain what are the functions of leaders and how do they perform their roles. Larsen (1999) expands this problem stating that even the concept of role is not clear within the discipline of political science. We will use Roos and Starke’s (1981) three definitions of roles<sup>1</sup> to set apart the different contributions to this theme. Therefore, we will distinguish *role*, as the normative pattern, from *style*, as the actual behaviour (the consequence of performing a role). In a first brief set of literature review, we will start by looking at different approaches to what justifies the different roles of a leader. Then, we will present the key features that differentiate the ‘performance’ of these roles in the political realm, when compared to other contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> As normative patterns, as expectations from others, or as actual behaviour (Roos and Starke, 1981)

*The roles of a political leader*

One of the major debates that shaped both leadership theories and research agendas was the need to understand if leadership made a difference. Burns recalls the cynical story of the Frenchman observing the crowd during revolution, saying: “there goes the mob. I am their leader. I must follow them!” (Burns, 1978: 265). Suggesting that we often place too great an emphasis on the effects of leaders’ actions, Burns directs our attention towards their roles.

Which roles are expected from leaders? Storey’s (2004) three meta-capabilities are interesting to draw the broad picture. The first role of a leader results from his capability to ‘make sense of the big picture’. The second role derives from the ability to make change happen. The third one is inter-organizational representation. The first two capabilities can be summarized as resulting from the leaders’ *awareness* and *sense of autonomy*. In fact, the ability to ‘understand’, ‘read’, and ‘translate’ the complex context where he lives in – *being aware* – is a fundamental role of the leader, at least it is something that is expected from leaders (cf. Isaiah Berlin’s ‘The Hedgehog and the Fox’). His capacity to translate this into change is only possible if the leader has the real possibility to do it and if he believes he can do it: therefore, if he feels that he has the autonomy to implement change<sup>2</sup>.

This agenda goes beyond simple supervision, as it goes above and apart from management (Elcock, 2000, Kotter, 1990). According to Lord and Maher (1991) the essence of leadership is being perceived as leader by others, as for management involves a set of tasks that are associated to a particular organizational position. House *et al* (1996) define leadership, in this same sense, as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members”. This clearly goes beyond the expected roles of someone who simply occupies a particular position in an organization. This kind of actions and consequences of actions are only expected from those perceived as leaders (Komrad, 2000).

For instance, if one focus on the extensive scholarship on local governance, one finds several examples of research on leadership roles. As seen in Olivier Borraz and Peter John’s work: “the leader’s function is to create forms of cooperation between individuals or groups by helping them forge stable conceptions of their role and identity, in order for

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<sup>2</sup> Similar to Andrews’ (2004) three-factor model, that included *acceptance*, *authority*, and *ability*.

them to engage in a collective action bearing meaning” (Borraz and John, 2004). To do so, the “effective modern leader recognises the value of decentralising authority not just to officers but to citizens as well (Burns *et al*, 1994).”

According to Howard Gardner, leaders, “by word and/or personal example, markedly influence the behaviours, thoughts, and/or feelings of a significant number of their fellow human beings” (Gardner, 1995). Jo Brosnahan, focusing on leadership in the public sector, sees it as “that special mix of gifts that include integrity, vision, the ability to inspire others, a deep awareness of self, courage to innovate, and instant and impeccable sense of judgement” (Brosnahan, 1999). A more complete description of leaders’ tasks was presented by Thomas Lenz:

“Involves diagnosing situations, determining what needs to be done and marshalling collective effort to achieve a desired future or avert significant problems [...]. It entails the use of power and persuasion to define and determine the changing [...] problems and opportunities [...] of an organization, and the solutions produced and actions taken by individuals and groups both inside and outside an organization to cope with such issues [...]” (Lenz, 1993: 154-155).

Regarding specifically the case of political leadership, Dennis Kavanagh (1990: 63-65) contrasted *reconcilers* with *mobilizers*. The first case reflects those who seek consensus between different cultures and political parties, in order to attain stability and reconciling opposing interests. On the other hand, *mobilizers* offer a particular way of achieving policy goals. They offer vision in conditions of crisis and dissatisfaction, defining an agenda and inspiring followers to seek the same path.

Disillusion with politics in western democracies is often related with government’s remoteness from people and from an increasingly inability to produce desired changes. Whenever *mobilizers* appear – as they must present a different style from that of the *reconcilers*, whom people often see as simple ‘managers in government’ – great expectations and general hope are more visible: Barack Obama’s political campaign might constitute a good example of this transformation. In fact, in politics, Paul Joyce says, “it is



important to recognize the primacy of politicians in creating strategic visions” (Joyce, 2003). They are expected to articulate and offer vision to followers.

These patterns are useful to understand expectations around the work of leaders, and the reasons behind their roles. However, as a consequence of the – almost exclusive – normative approaches to these previous issues, we claim that further developments in political leadership theory are more prone to happen as a result of delivering better understanding on leadership styles, rather than continue to explore leaders’ roles.

### *Political Leadership distinctive characteristics*

Political leadership implies, first of all, public office-holding – often as a consequence of democratic elections. And this – apparently innocuous observation – holds important consequences. In fact, office-holding is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for exercising political leadership.

Besides holding a position – *headship* – a set of other relevant conditions are required to provide individuals with the possibility to exercise leadership: the adequate skills (Greenstein, 2000; Keohane, 2005), enough time in office (Bynander and ‘t Hart, 2007), political momentum (Skowronek, 2008), the opportunities given by situation (Boin *et al*, 2009), and even luck (Dowding, 2008b). In fact, both personal and contextual dimensions are relevant in order to allow *headship* to become *leadership* (Levine, 1974).

On the other hand, besides being insufficient it might also be unnecessary:

“Vibrant civil societies provide democracies with a rich mosaic of non-office based public leadership: watchdogs, moralists, dissidents, clergy, revolutionaries, social entrepreneurs. Some rely on personal charisma to build momentous social movements, others effectively exploit the moral capital of already established non-government institutions to perform civic leadership work” (Kane, Patapan and ‘t Hart, 2009: 583).

This leadership dispersal asks for a re-balance of the study of leadership in political science. The nature and consequences of considering leadership as something that goes beyond formal borders of executive governments must be part of the research agendas, as well as an important dimension of the more traditional approaches. The endeavour of



studying political leadership, whilst with a focus on office-holders, must take into account the consequences of this multiplication of ‘civic leaders’ and its networked connections with formal and elected ones. The complexity of contemporary governance, with its multi-level dimensions, institutional and agent’s dispersion, offered a fertile soil to the emergence of new approaches like collaborative governance and facilitative leadership (i.e. Svava, 1994). This emphasis on collaboration based on the premise that political leadership is growing as a boundary-crosser phenomenon, specially across formal institutional and governmental borders, has reinforced its main characteristic: permanent adaptability to new political contexts.

Finally, and in opposition, it is also arguable that office-holding is necessary to exercise leadership. In fact, one can have all the needed skills, and be extremely aware of situations and opportunities, but might not have the institutional ‘allowance’ to deliver guidance and exercise power.

The above-mentioned distinctive factors of *headship* and *leadership* deserve further analysis, particularly because it leads to an important and central question on this debate: what sets the distinctiveness of political leadership?

Its characteristics include:

(a) Conflicting sources of leadership

The first major difference is set by the need to combine *authority leadership* with *legitimacy leadership*. Particularly if one considers it being exercised under a liberal democratic regime with numerous individuals able to demand answers, policies, and a ‘way of acting’ that is coherent with accountable and transparent governance. The political leader is not solely dependent on formal authority given by election – for instance – and appointment to a particular public role (authority by office-holding), but he also needs approval and acceptance, which will contribute to his legitimacy. This is especially true because its effectiveness will strongly depend on this approval, particularly if collective action and collaborative governance is needed. In fact, opposing concepts like ‘leader democracy’ (Pakulski and Higley, 2008) and ‘democratic leadership’ seem to clear out both dimensions of leadership: the first reminds us of the power of strong constitutional authority to ‘manage’ democracies; as for the second one, it

focuses on ‘people’s power’ to opt between alternatives, therefore asking for political leaders who seek for legitimacy.

Contrary to private sector contexts, where *authority leadership* may often be its main source as a result of occupying a certain institutional position which allows the individual to use a set of power prerogatives, for political leadership to be effective – due to the insufficiency of just holding office, as seen before – it needs to be accompanied by *legitimacy*.

(b) Non-ascribed followership

A second dimension of distinctiveness results from followers’ characteristics. Leaders, especially in governmental positions, are confronted with the apparently uncomfortable fact that those to whom they work for – the ‘people’ – are ‘unknown’ to him. Every policy decision and its externalities have impacts on a large number of people, and certainly most of them are not faithful and loyal followers. ‘Close’ and ‘distant’ leadership (Metcalf and Metcalf, 2001) are continuously and simultaneously being exercised, as the leader faces an intricate mix of different followers.

Therefore, political leadership must always face *non-ascribed followership*. There is no hierarchical, formal or contractual relation between the political leader and people, as it is the case of the private sector (where leaders lead employers). ‘Lead all, be followed by few’ could be an appropriate aphorism.

(c) Follower-dependent

Contrary to the private sector (with the exception of cooperative arrangements and other participative models of business governance), followers are the ‘shareholders’ (it is not innocently that the use of the term stakeholder has had as such a success in scholarship). They hold all powers: they appoint the leader, follow him, assess his decisions, ‘feel’ the consequences of his actions, and decide on his maintenance in office. This *follower-dependence* – highlighted by the discourse of political accountability and transparency – can lead him to a position of ‘imprisonment by events’: to do solely what situation asks for, or what people demand.

(d) Multi-contextual settings

To be a political leader asks for individuals able to tackle with several, disperse, complex, and divergent issues (from economics to agriculture, from international security to health services...). Adaptability, rather than an answer to an overall context change, is an attempt to react – the best away possible in order to provide effectiveness – to particular, simultaneous, and often conflicting settings in where he acts. These *multi-contextual settings* in where the leader dwells constitute one of the most significant and distinctive characteristics of political leadership, and at the same time one of its most relevant difficulties. Private sector leadership, although one should assume its multi-tasked approach, can never attain the same level of complexity and diversity as it is the case of the political realm.

(e) Ambiguity

The changeability of events and the diversity of followers may influence individuals in leadership positions to be more *prone to ambiguity*. Despite the need to set clear policy objectives and to present comprehensible strategies to attain them, leaders might prefer to misrepresent it and to adopt more indistinct and vague actions. It allows greater opportunities to adapt in the future, more chances to satisfy different individuals and to guarantee the needed excuse in case of failure.

(f) Limited acceptance

The fact that the political leader is *not accepted* by all followers, right from the beginning of his ‘consulate’, poses different problems from those of the private sector. In democracy, and particularly in the case of simple majorities, the appointment of individuals to leading positions occurs despite of their levels of acceptance. To aggravate this, in most cases, political leaders are members of political parties, and often hold special responsibilities in party governing bodies. This fact easily promotes an ‘us and them’ mentality, not only from the leader’s perspective, but especially on general followers.

This conflict is intensified since, contrary to other ‘businesses’, politics in democratic contexts usually allows antagonism to express freely his opinion, occupying important and relevant positions, and characteristically recognises the opposition constitutional right to have a legitimate place in the ‘governing bodies’.

(g) Promoters of conflict

Political leaders are – more often than not – *promoters of conflict*. As a matter of fact, they are *expected to* generate disagreement and divergence. As holders of office positions, leaders see opportunities for policy change – and are expected to promote it.

(h) Mandate given permission

To be a political leader requires consent from those they govern, operating under different structures of scrutiny and accountability. This *mandate given permission* to govern requires the mobilization of individuals and groups to build consensus and acceptance. While, in the case of the private sector, permission to assume ‘office’ might not come from followers but from the leader’s own decision (because, for instance, he represents the majority of shareholders).

(i) Political and administrative tension

Finally, politicians operate within the constraints set by the *tension between political and administrative spheres*. This distinction between leadership and management is still a relevant issue, and not free of controversy. Peter Gronn (2003) offers an interesting distinction, allowing an epistemologically sound separation of facts and values: ‘doing things right’ refers to competence or technical mastery, which is much more appropriate to the role of management – as it derives from *manus*, the Latin word for *hand*; ‘doing the right thing’, on the other hand, implies desirable purposes, therefore, seeing the leader as the one from whom it is expected direction and guidance.

Warren Bennis suggests that this dichotomy reflects “the differences between those who master the context and those who surrender to it” (Bennis, 1989: 45),

saying that the leader is the one who innovates, develops, focuses on people, inspires trust, has a long-range perspective and asks ‘what’ and ‘why’; whereas the manager is the one who administers, maintains, focuses on structure and control, takes a short-range view and asks ‘how’ and ‘when’. This perspective holds managers as followers, while leaders are seen as entrepreneurs. As Amin Rajan puts it, management is about path following, while leadership is path finding (Rajan, 2000).

However, Gerald Gabris and his colleagues describe political leadership as highly enigmatic:

“On the one hand, public administrators are expected to advocate innovative and creative solutions to complex problems. Yet, by acting as advocates, public administrators increase the risk that they will step on political toes or at some point appear overly brash” (Gabris *et al*, 1998).

This is a permanent tension in contemporary governance where political leaders may be highly dependent on bureaucracies, particularly in Welfare States, as big governments require big administrations and control. In these cases administrators are also expected to exercise influence and are key players for the sake of effective governance. The nature of decision making sets another problem, as it is expressed through a tension between *political* decisions and technically informed ones.

Eventually other distinctive factors could be presented in order to differentiate political leadership. However, the abovementioned ones place a sufficient and relevant set of characteristics, situating this especial kind of leadership in a particular frame. When analysing and trying to offer understanding about the exercise political leadership one must, therefore, take into account all these particularities. A style of political leadership is, always, a consequence of the complexity, novelty, adaptability and contingency of its exercise.

## 2.4 – Leadership theories and concept coherence

### *Not a definition, but definitions*

No approach, theory or model of leadership has so far offered a cohesive explanation of leadership; indeed – and first of all – there is no consensus on its meaning. Leadership carries particular connotations for different people, particularly to those who often are referred as leaders: Bass (1990) identified over 1500 different definitions of the term. In fact, just to use some of the often quoted definitions, the former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said that “the art of leadership is saying no, not yes. It is very easy to say yes”. Dwight Eisenhower saw it as “the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it”. And, Napoleon’s best aphorism was: “a leader is a leader in hope”.

Etymology of this word – which has been adapted to different contemporary idioms – comes from Old Saxon and Old High German, meaning “take with one” or “show the way” (Hoad, 1988). This person in front (*leidha* in Old Icelandic) was the one who undaunted opened the safe path through the unknown dangers and showed others how to reach their objective safe and sound.

Systematic scientific research on the theme of leadership has only begun on the twentieth century (Bass, 1990), and since then it has been addressed from a variety of perspectives. As Warren Bennis stated:

“Of all the hazy and confounding areas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top nomination. And, ironically, probably more has been written and less known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioural sciences” (Bennis, 1959: 259).

Gary Yukl agreed, arguing:

“Sometimes different terms have been used to refer to the same type of behaviour. At other times, the same term has been defined differently by various theorists. What is treated as a general behaviour category by one theorist is viewed as two or three distinct categories by another theorist. What is a key concept in one taxonomy is absent from another. Different

taxonomies have emerged from different research disciplines, and it is difficult to translate from one set of concepts to another” (Yukl, 2002: 61).

Likewise, Ralph Melvin Sotgdill remarked that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as those who have attempted to define the concept” (Sotgdill, 1974). This lack of a coherent theory on leadership has been a consequence of scholars being mostly focused on specific parts of it, from leader’s biographies to personalities, from styles to motivations. Given this it seems relevant to return to the historical roots of leadership theories and review its progress, providing a broad framework.

Leadership as a complex construct has been always open to subjective interpretation and is influenced by different theoretical stances. As argued by Covey (1992), the approach to the study of leadership has followed different paths, namely: (1) the ‘meta’ leadership, regarding vision and control over what is entrusted to a leader; (2) the ‘macro’ leadership, focused on strategy and organization; and, (3) the ‘micro’ leadership, which concerns relationships, legitimacy and accountability.

As a consequence, several conflicting dichotomies can be identified when reviewing the literature on leadership theory (see Table 2.1). Grint (2004) advances a series of problems that contribute to this apparently impossible consensus about its definition: the *process problem* (no agreement on whether leadership results from personal qualities or from leaders’ actions); the *position problem* (leadership as a result of formal authority or informal influence); the *philosophy problem* (leaders influence is intentional or their actions are determined by context).

The position problem has been one of the main focuses of research. It argues that leadership may be regarded as related to structural phenomena (a result of holding office, occupying a formal position), or in contrast it may be seen as the possession of certain skills and behavioural characteristics that contribute to the ability to influence others. This distinction between authority (as an exercise of *power over* others), and influence (as the possibility to have *power to* persuade others) is extremely important to understand leadership theories (Stone 1989). Regardless of the diverse approaches to the political

leadership concept, the focus that prevails is on political leader's influence (Blondel, 1987)<sup>3</sup>.

Another problem can be identified as a result of the *source* of leadership. Northouse (2004) defines leadership, locating the individual as its source, as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”, and identifies four topics which contemporary theories of leadership have in common: leadership is a (1) *process* that occurs in (2) *group contexts*; involving (3) *influence* and (3) *goal attainment*. On the other hand, Yukl (2002) provides a more collective idea of leadership: “most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over other people (or groups) to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation”.

<b><i>Leadership seen as:</i></b>	<b><i>Leadership as a result of:</i></b>		
<i>Process</i>	<i>Personal Traits</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>Leaders Actions</i>
<i>Position</i>	<i>Formal authority</i> <i>(power over)</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>Informal influence</i> <i>(power to)</i>
<i>Philosophy</i>	<i>Intentional influence</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>Context determined influence</i>
<i>Sources</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>Collective</i>
<i>Determinants</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>vs.</i>	<i>Situational</i>

Table 2.1 – Leadership concept problems: dichotomies

Explaining *leaders' trajectories* and the *determinants* of their different styles and behaviours constitute a fifth problem. The progression, over the time, of the conceptualisation on this topic led to different approaches to what it meant. These approaches included trait theory, with the focus on individual characteristics of leadership (Stogdill, 1948), and situational theories, focusing on the impact of the context in which

<sup>3</sup> i) the influence of the political leaders evolves along a political process; ii) the extent of the influence of the leaders depends on their margin of discretion for the accomplishment of their roles, and iii) the strength of the influence depends on the constraints that the context exerts on the accomplishment of the roles (Elgie, 1995).



the leader finds himself in (Fiedler, 1967; House & Mitchell, 1970). Lowndes and Leach (2004) work on constitutions, context and capabilities is a good example of the dilemma of the determinants of leaders' styles. A particular attention will be given to this theme further on.

Most of the theories with an emphasis on change portraying leaders as 'managers of meaning' (Bryman, 1996: 280) – those who raise the desires of others so that leaders and followers' goals fuse together – can be grouped in charismatic/transformational theories or in transactional theories (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Transactional leaders use rewards as a control mechanism to carry out the exchange relationship explicitly established to externally motivate followers, whereas transformational leaders use rewards as a component of a system designed to increase followers' commitment and internally motivate them. Transformational leadership has been criticized of leader-centred unidirectional influence and limited in the impact of follower characteristics on the leadership process (Graham, 1991; Beyer, 1999; Yukl, 2002).

Arising from an increasing awareness of the importance of social networks in the leadership role, more recent studies tended to approach the notion of leadership as more networked dependent and as a distributed process. Leadership is seen as emergent from a group of interacting individuals, rather than from a particular one, as "these new models emphasise the importance of follower participation, democratic involvement and decision-making and make a claim for a less formalised, hierarchical model leadership" (Mandell and Keast, 2007).

Far from pretending to solve all these problems regarding leadership concept definition and theories, we intend to focus our attention on political leadership taking into account the abovementioned discussion, particularly on what regards its determinants.

#### *Diverse and complementary approaches*

Significant research on leadership has produced diverse approaches to this theme and has, certainly, introduced more complexity than opportunities to get a clear stance about it. Bass and Stogdill's *Handbook of Leadership* provided an exhaustive review that illustrates its diversity. This terrain is defined by two boundaries: from the naivety of seeing political outcomes as mere projections of leaders' personal qualities, to the crude view that individuals have no effect. Although impossible to regard every dominant theory

or approach as part of a tight denomination, tendency or historical era, it is possible to capture its central themes and categories in order to produce an informative overview.

(a) Trait theories

The first dominant framework, known as *trait* or – more straightforwardly – ‘great men’ theory (Van Seters and Field, 1990), has left a lasting imprint on scholarship. Effective leaders were believed to show common characteristics, and From Plato’s *Republic* and Machiavelli’s *Prince* to contemporary authors like Ralph Melvin Stogdill (1948), Bernard Bass (1990) and Peter G. Northouse (2004), the list of necessary personality traits expanded and became more complex. This tradition on studies around the *Prince* of politics had its apex described in studies on eminent people, as in Francis Galton’s work. His own words explain it better: “no man can achieve a very high reputation without being gifted with very high abilities and few who possess these very high abilities can fail in achieving eminence” (Galton, 1869: 15). In a series of lectures on heroes, Thomas Carlyle summarizes trait theory’s approach to political leadership by stating that “the history of the world is the history of great men” (Carlyle, 1972: 13). The assumption that there are few men who are able to move history forward because of their greatness have more sophisticated echoes in the later trait theories, although still impregnated with ‘hero worship’ preferences. Northouse’s (2004) attempt to identify a small number of convergent traits suggests determination, intelligence, integrity, self-confidence and sociability as the most relevant.

This approach reveals two main problems: first, the list of merits can grow infinitely as research continues; second, individual qualities are not powerful predictors across different situations. Inclusiveness and flexibility – common needs in contemporary polity where context complexity and governance networks elasticity are underlying features – do not coadunate with permanent personal attributes.

Meanwhile, transitional paths have been followed by some authors, as Stogdill’s review of the research on the subject – more than one hundred studies from 1904 to 1947 (his research was published in 1948) – may reveal. Ralph M. Stogdill concluded “the qualities, characteristics, and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader” (Stogdill, 1948: 63).

The tendency to reduce complexity to simplicity in order to allow understanding might have led us to consider this approach as one of the most relevant and permanent in leadership studies. Certainly it would be rather difficult to portray the history of the twentieth century without recognizing the role of important figures like Roosevelt, Churchill, Hitler or Stalin. However, much more was happening ‘outside their heads’ and far beyond their control.

(b) Styles approach

A second wave of leadership theory focused on leader’s behaviours. Influenced by Ohio State University and University of Michigan research groups during the late 1940s and early 1950s, what initially was presented as a descriptive approach to what leaders do, it later became a consolidated perspective on leadership styles. Blake and Mouton’s (1964) managerial grid is an excellent example of this branch of leadership studies, as it represented individual’s concern with the results of his actions (horizontal axis), and concern for people (vertical axis). The resulting quadrants presented four leadership styles as a function of these dichotomous preferences.

Bernard Bass developed this model and used it to describe five different styles (Bass *et al*, 1975; Bass, 1976): *directive* leaders initiate action and tell subordinates what to do and how to do it, exercising firm rule and ensuring that the path is being followed; *consultative* leaders discuss matters with followers before telling them what to do, paying attention to their opinions, preferences and ideas; *participative* leaders discuss and analyse problems with followers in order to reach consensus, through group decision where equal responsibilities in decision making is stressed; *negotiative* leaders bargain to gain desired ends, make political alliances and offer rewards; and *delegative* leaders describe the problem or the desired goal or the conditions that need to be met, making suggestions, but leaving decision on what to do and how to the followers. Action-centred model of leadership extended this framework, arguing that effective leaders address needs at three levels: task, team and individual (Adair, 1973).

These descriptive models of leadership styles were replaced by more prescriptive ones, suggesting its value and convenience for the option between different styles accordingly to the context. However, research has found it difficult to identify the impact of leadership styles, mainly due to exogenous factors (Korman, 1966; Larson *et al*, 1976).

(c) Context and contingency

Thirdly, recognizing that leaders may adopt different behaviours, research turned to whether these styles were preferable to specific contexts. The focus on context had in Hersey and Blanchard (1969) an appropriation of Blake and Mouton's framework in order to demonstrate how different followers, in terms of their competencies, played an important role in the style of the leader.

Bass *et al* (1975), as an example, found that particular leadership styles are associated with personal, relational, task and organizational characteristics. As Philip Hodgson and Randall White claim, "effective leadership is finding a good fit between behaviour, context, and need" (Hodgson and White, 2001).

The focus on context originated also a fourth approach: it considered the leader less able to adapt his actions to the situation he was in. The *contingency approach* identifies the effective leader as the one who matches his circumstances (Fiedler, 1964), and depends on the favourableness of the situation: (1) how defined and structured it is; (2) how much authority the leader has; and (3) the leader's relation with his followers (Fiedler, 1964: 230-241). Fiedler's contingency theory, particularly because it argues that it is easier to change the leader when situation asks for it than to a leader to change his style, has been criticized for inconsistent results (Bryman, 1992: 20).

However, the various contingency approaches had the merit of recognizing context as an important factor to understand leader's actions, assuring that one style that works on a particular situation does not necessarily fit in another.

(d) Relational dimension

Still aware of the role of situations, in the early 1970s, scholarship started to focus on the relation between leaders and their followers. Chemers refers to this stage as the "second generation of contingency theories" (Chemers, 1997: 44). Its main transitional point in this field of studies came from Burns's (1978) work on transformational leadership. As seen before, this approach still plays an important role in contemporary scholarship, and its relevance was emphasized by Bass's (1985) work on a cohesive model of leadership based on transactional and transformational exercise of leadership.

These approaches seek understanding – and most of the times assume prescriptive functions – on how leader and followers raise each other's motivation, and give sense to strategy and vision, through the accomplishing of higher purposes.

Scholarship that focus on the relation with followers tend to offer *messianic* types of leaders – as the *visionary* kind (Sashkin, 1988) – whose concerns are targeted on changing organizational culture and followers' motivation in line with his vision. It allows, also, the return of a 'remake' of *charismatic* leadership – a way of embracing all those inspiring, trustful and outstanding leaders (Bass, 1988). Contrary to Weber, to whom charisma resulted from personal qualities, contemporary views consider it as a consequence of the relationship between the leader and his followers (House, 1997). This relationship was emphasized by Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban Metcalfe's (2001) work on 'close' and 'distant' leadership.

#### (e) Creative skills

Contemporary trends in leadership theory include a "sage-like attempt to reconcile the complexities of leadership while appreciating the aesthetics of the phenomenon" (Shoup, 2005:4). New metaphors, grouped in large categories as Navigational, Pastoral-Parental and Performance (idem), translate what has become a relevant trend – focusing on leadership as quasi-wisdom, an almost spiritual and artistic way of acting in the public sphere.

For instance, Keith Grint's constitutive approach questions the objectivity in the definition of context and which leadership styles are better suited, emphasizing the 'interpretive' way of analysing it:

"We may never know [...] the true essence of an identity, a leader, or a situation... and must often base our actions and beliefs on the accounts of others from whom we can (re)constitute our version of events [...]. Leadership is an invention [...] it is primarily rooted in, and a product of, the imagination" (Grint, 2000: 10).

Leadership is, for this author, more of an art than a science. In fact, in addition to reasoning and analytical skills, creativeness and intuition are generally regarded as relevant

to effective leadership. Both vision and strategy are important characteristics of this new leader, and ask for well-developed cognitive abilities (Kotter, 1988). However, facing process ambiguity and information scarcity, it also asks for creativity and to what Stephen Zaccaro and Deanna Banks (2001) called ‘meta-cognitive’ skills.

It is not clear what the next face of leadership studies will look like, and which approach will have its opportunity. However, it seems obvious that reconceptualizations of leadership and how it is enacted will follow.

#### *New directions and new questions*

Each of these different, rich and complex approaches to leadership, have particular relevance when we focus on its *political* aspect. *Political* leadership theory – although distinct – followed the same pathways and has seen its scholarship being fed by these complex – and often divergent – approaches. When incoherence, diversity, lack of consistence is used to classify research on this matter, one can understand its reasons. And this is the less important of the disapprovals, when compared to the allegation of inattentiveness about this theme by political scientists over the last decades.

Yukl, in his extensive review of literature on leadership, concluded:

“Most of the theories are beset with conceptual weaknesses and lack strong empirical support. Several thousand empirical studies have been conducted but most of the results are contradictory and inconclusive” (Yukl, 2002).

Contemporary leadership theories appear to be a product of the context. Gronn suggests that “theories of leadership wax and wane in keeping with wider cultural and economic shifts and developments” (Gronn, 1995).

However, each of the approaches presented above indicate an ‘underground’ coherent path that leads to a novel question that remains to be answered, which might help theory and research to improve: why does a political leader behaves like one? Or, in other words, how does he become a political leader? Answering what impels an individual to adopt a particular behaviour that allows him to be recognized and – sometimes – succeed as a leader will allow scholars to better understand this phenomenon and will help practitioners to be aware of it and to adapt.

David Van Seters and Richard Field have, early in 1990, argued that leadership theory would evolve and provide new answers and applications, asking researches to recognize that leadership:

- (1) “is a complex, interactive process with behavioural, relational, and situational elements;
- (2) Is found not solely in the leader but occurs at individual, dyadic, group, and organizational levels;
- (3) Is promoted upwards from lower organizational levels as much as it is promoted downwards from higher levels;
- (4) Occurs internally, within the leader-subordinate interactions, as well as externally, in the situational environment;
- (5) Motivates people intrinsically by improving expectations, not just extrinsically by improving reward systems.” (Van Seters and Field, 1990: 39)

Amongst these recommendations for futures research, Van Seters and Field should have included the need to avoid normative or ideological approaches to the phenomenon. An error they committed when concluding the article, claiming the “new leader” to be the one who “energises people to action, develops followers into leaders, and transforms organizational members into agents of change” (ibidem: 41). Again, scholarship tended to offer a view of the ‘adequate’ style of leadership, rather than offering a useful tool to explain different leadership styles, and providing answers to how an individual becomes a leader.

We advance an approach that centres the analysis of political leadership on the leader. Understanding the individual within a set of complex relations, social links, contextual conditions, cultural constraints, institutional rules, and driven by his own choices, allows us to build a more complete picture of the theme. This next step on the path to understand leadership styles recognizes that *trait* theories began with this same framework, trying to answer which personality characteristics are at stake when someone is a ‘great man’. However, we add all the important inputs and knowledge developed by subsequent approaches: recognizing context as having an important role. The dichotomy



between relation-centred and individual-centred approaches, as well as most of the other abovementioned conflicting perspectives (cf. Table 2.1), has produced more harm to the development of the theory than – although acknowledgeable – important contributions to understanding. The need to choose between sides is still present, even in recent literature. As an example, Roger Gill claims that “the essence of leadership is not the leader but the relationship” (Gill, 2006: 61). However, one should bear in mind who is in fact under scrutiny: the leader.

Although it would seem too generous to gather all these theory approaches under the general umbrella of *style*-focused perspectives, it is recognizable that more or less explicitly all offered clues to answer the same question: how does a leader act? The next important step is to provide tools that allow us to understand why a leader acts like he does.

## 2.5 – Exploring leadership styles

There is an immense amount of research geared to identify the best ways of explaining successful styles of leadership and how to help leaders develop them. This approach is frequently criticized since it is heavily normative. Nevertheless, this is largely irrelevant since normative elements can be easily purged from the analysis and research can be directed towards strictly empirical data about the relation between leadership styles and, for instance, group performance. However, the real intricacy lies elsewhere: how does a leader become that specific *kind of leader*?

As mentioned above, several limitations of this approach to leadership theory can be identified, mainly due to systematic fail to consider the contingencies in leaders’ situations (Korman, 1976). It has remained largely unfulfilled due to an emphasis on the individual, his followers and the task he performs, addressing behaviour but not values and preferences of the leader. Contrary to Adair (1989), Goffee and Jones (2000) claim that it is not the style that matters in order to make a great leader, but his underlying personal qualities – allowing his style to be effective. These theories were not able to offer an explanation on *how* leaders can change their style accordingly to their situation, values change or alteration on followers needs. They are also unable to explain how leaders acquire and interpret the meaning of these changes (Fleishman *et al*, 1991).



Therefore, a more consistent leadership-style approach needs to consider, not only the individual, his relations with followers and the tasks he performs, but also must take into account personal qualities and values, context and situations. And, it must allow style adaptation and eventual change, accordingly to changes in the other factors.

The earliest studies of leadership styles were conducted in the late 1930s (e.g. Lewin, Lippit and White, 1939). The main focus of these experiments was on how leaders influenced and conducted groups, and three styles were identified: the *authoritarian*, with unilateral decision and personal control; the *democratic*, with followers involved in decision making; and the *laissez-faire*, with little or none influence being exerted by the leader. With the rise of behaviourism the, already mentioned, Ohio State University and University of Michigan programs of research converged on the identification of *task-oriented* and *people-oriented* dimensions of leader behaviour. This research proved highly robust and influenced subsequent research (Bass, 1990).

Consistent with this approach, McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Theory Y models of leadership presented contrasting views of human nature, where the argument stressed the superiority of people-oriented practices of management – leaders were supposed to create conditions for followers to fulfil their personal needs and to grow their potential. However, research efforts led to contradictory results: there were cases where task oriented styles (Theory X) delivered better results, and others where people oriented ones (Theory Y) were more effective.

Probably the most lasting consequence of this period of leadership style research was the recognition that leadership requires both directive actions, as well as an enabling component – taking into account the characteristics of those being influenced.

#### *A local governance focus*

The particular case of local governance has offered a rich diversity of research on political leadership styles. Several reasons might have contributed to this multiplicity of examples:

- (1) its smaller scale, which allowed a more intense focus on case studies, and a deeper and accurate analysis of leader's in action;

- (2) its diversity, offering researches several simultaneous cases and allowing comparative analysis within the same country or between countries;
- (3) and, in some cases, its minor time frame of office holding, which allows chronological and sequential analysis of different local political leaders (one replacing another) or of the same (being re-elected).

More than focusing on the way the position of political leaders is institutionalised in the context of local government and the broader political system, research has pursued understanding on “the enactment of leadership roles by those actors who are holders of a leadership position”<sup>4</sup> (Getimis and Heinelt, 2004).

Several attempts have been made in order to develop a classification of these styles (e.g. Kotter and Lawrence 1974, Barber 1977, Kavanagh 1990, John and Cole 1999). The first dimension of leadership that had a particular impact on literature was on leaders’ attitudes and behaviours towards change and problem solving. Dahl’s (1961) *broker* and Banfield’s (1961) *entrepreneur*, alongside with Pressman’s (1972) *figurehead* form of mayoral leadership might constitute the so-called classic model of local political leadership. The concept of leadership is, in all these styles, linked to both goal-oriented behaviour and influence over others’ decisions (Levine and Kaufman, 1974). A second important dimension of analysis results from the leader/follower relationship. Transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1995) are the two main referred models in literature. These view leaders in terms of their aptitude to change the state of affairs or in terms of the pattern of their transactions with followers (Purdue, 2001). The third dimension is about power delegation. The key distinction here lies between the will to act through cooperation (Stone, 1995) and the desire to act authoritatively (Getimis and Hlepas, 2006).

We suggest three main dimensions that allow important distinctions between the several attempts to identify, classify and explain leadership styles at the local level of governance: how a leader faces change and problems, how he establishes his relations with followers, and how power is delegated.

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<sup>4</sup> Levine’s (1974) distinction between ‘headship’ and ‘leadership’.

(a) Attitudes and behaviours towards change and problem solving

The first dimension of leadership that had a particular impact on literature is the leaders' *attitudes and behaviours towards change and problem solving*. The before-mentioned Dahl's (1961) *broker*, Banfield's (1961) *entrepreneur* and Pressman's (1972) *figurehead* form of mayoral leadership constitute a relevant model of local political leadership. The *broker* acts as a reactive mayor, protecting his power position by implementing consensual decisions, never facing power costing situations like his own policy implementation since that might endanger him. The *entrepreneur*, like the *broker*, does not want to face controversial situations, but has "definite policy desires of his own" (Levine and Kaufman, 1974). Therefore he attempts to mould the community's preferences and expectations, trying to build the needed consensus to advance on policy implementation.

However, as Myron Levine (1980) explained, there were several limitations of the *broker/entrepreneurial* model of leadership. First of all it was a product of the time in which it was developed – the 1950's - and those types of leaders were not prepared to face the major social questions that emerged the years after. Secondly, Banfield's and Dahl's model reflects leadership styles suitable for pluralist systems, and does not provide a suitable approach for leaders actions that go beyond consensual implementation of policy initiatives.

From Levine's (1980) work we can further elaborate on these leadership styles as a consequence of different dichotomies: leaders' will to maximize or minimize his impact<sup>5</sup>; with individual or consensual oriented action, and with high or low concern for personal power position. This model produces six styles of leadership (see Table 2.2) The first three reflect leaders who are not so interested in maximizing their policy impact: the one confined to his *Ceremonial* duties, as Pressman's (1972) *figurehead*; the *Caretaker* of what exists, similar to Dahl's (1961) 'broker'; and the leader who only uses his formal *Executive*

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<sup>5</sup> The high/low impact dimension of leadership above mentioned had an interesting 'translation' to *strategic* and *reproductive* leadership predisposition, done by Getimis and Hlepas (2006), reflecting the way leaders (mayors) "envisage their roles". The change-oriented leaders believe their action is possible in order to address and solve problems, setting long term goals. Taking into account the 'time horizon of strategic leadership' these leaders are also *proactive* (Getimis and Hlepas, 2006). On the other hand, reproductive leaders – *reactive* - don't believe in the ability to promote transformations, preferring a policy framework that allows the reproduction of the *status quo* and do not intend to provide vision and strategic directions.

resources. The other set identifies alternative leadership styles for the highly goal-oriented ones: from the consensual and highly concerned with his individual position Banfield's (1961) *Entrepreneur*, to the *Ideologue* leader, whose action is more individualistically defined, more combative and with a lower concern for personal power position; and the *Partisan* one that lies between both, mostly due to his will to advance factional interests, less concerned with consensus building but more politically pragmatic than the ideologue.

		Leaders policy impact		
		High impact	Low impact	
Decision	Consensus	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Broker/Caretaker</i>	High concern f/self
		<i>Partisan</i>	<i>Executive</i>	
	Individual	<i>Ideologue</i>		Low concern f/ self

Table 2.2 - Leadership styles and problem solving

Yates' (1977) typology on leadership styles also presented this dimension as an important one: the degree of activism and innovation that they display in their daily work. The active and innovative styles comprise the *Entrepreneur* and the *Crusader*, distinguished by their different levels of political and financial resources possessed – strong power base in the first case, weak in the second.

“Crusaders lack resources and political clout but they want to make a difference (...) rely[ing] heavily on dramatising issues and seeking to develop support through the force of principles and personality” (Hambleton, 2005).

“Entrepreneurs have sufficient political and financial resources to allow them to act decisively on substantive policy issues (...) [and] they can push and deliver on big projects” (Hambleton, 2005)

The less active leaders include the *Boss* and *Broker* styles, also different due to the same situational aspect. *Boss* leaders also have substantial resources but their efforts are

directed mainly to maintain control. Finally, the *Broker*-type leader lacks sufficient resources to act and limit their vision to mediating conflicts.

(b) Leader/follower relationship

A second important dimension of analysis results from the *leader/follower relationship*. *Transformational leaders* can lead followers to perform beyond expected levels as a consequence of his influence (Bryman, 1992; Bass, 1985). On the other hand, *transactional leadership* gives a strong role to followers - involved with symbolic interactions with leaders (Hollander, 1993) - and refers to the process of exchange between them (Krishnan, 2003). Bass (1995) developed the first model splitting transformational leadership into four dimensions: a leader has ‘charisma’ when provides vision and sense of mission; the leader promotes ‘individual consideration’ as he can provide teaching, stimulating learning experiences, and treats followers as individuals; a leaders provides ‘intellectual stimulation’ when he gives followers new ideas, asks for new solutions, and emphasises reasoning and problem-solving; and a leader can also be a font of ‘inspiration’ acting as a model, behaving in motivational and inspiring ways, providing meaning and communicating a vision. A third model – the *contingency approach* or situational leadership – emphasizes the pressure and demands put on leaders by their institutional context (Chemers, 1993). This results from the agreement in literature that context matters to shape leadership styles. Yates’ (1977) typology, discussed above, already used this approach as a dimension that explained the difference between strong and weak power based leaders. Hersey’s (1984) situational approach in a management context uses two dimensions - task and relationship – generating four possible styles: telling, selling, participating and delegating (Table 2.3).

Relationship (Degree of two way communication)	Task (Degree to which task is spelt out)	
	Low	High
High	<i>Leadership through participation</i> followers are able but unwilling	<i>Leadership through selling</i> followers are unable but willing
Low	<i>Leadership through delegation</i> followers are able and willing	<i>Leadership through telling</i> followers are unable and unwilling

Adapted from Hambleton (2005). Source: Hersey (1984).

Table 2.3 – Situational leadership styles and leader/follower relationships

All three models – transactional, transformational and situational - have revealed helpful in explaining leadership styles, and seem to be complementary.

(c) Power delegation

The ‘third dimension’ present in literature, and also resulting from the latter, refers to ‘power delegation’. *Cooperative* leaders mobilize other social actors, recognizing their role in policy implementation, and put their efforts on building networks, enabling participation. By contrast, *authoritarian* leaders use their hierarchical power to influence, awarding less importance to partnerships and reinforcing their top-down approach of command and control.

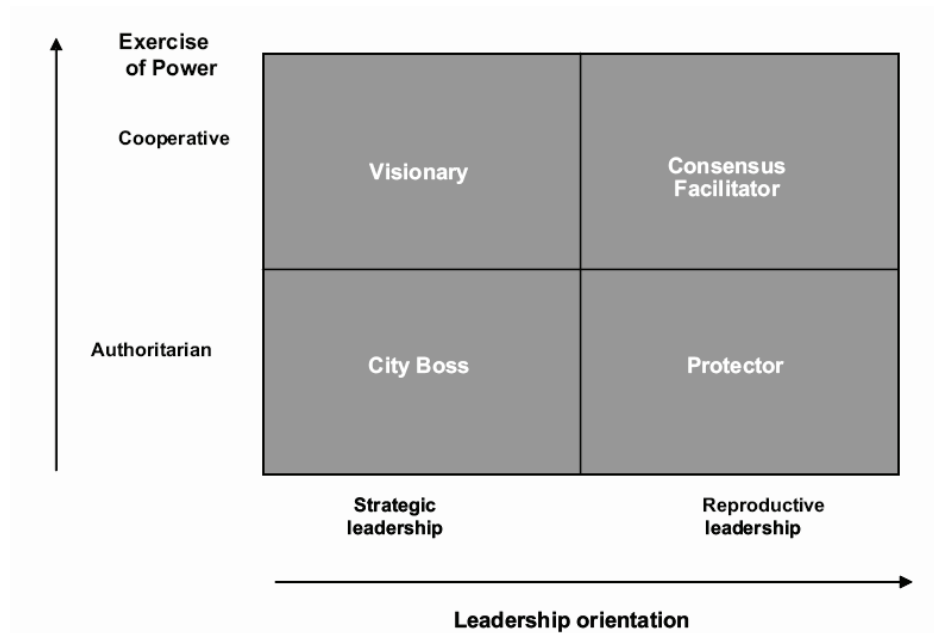


Figure 2.1 – Power and leadership styles

Source: Getimis and Hlepas (2006), adapted from John and Cole (1999).

Getimis and Hlepas (2006) building on Leach and Wilson (2000) further elaborate John and Cole’s (1999) approach and explored political leadership styles, on the local government context, as the “personal enactment of the institutional position of leadership within a given environment (...) in relation to two dimensions: leadership predisposition and attitude towards the exercise of power” (Getimis and Hlepas, 2006:179). More precisely two dichotomies were constructed producing four categories as components of

two dimensions, ‘exercise of power’ and ‘leadership predisposition’: the *strategic/reproductive orientation* of leaders, and the *authoritarian/cooperative attitude*. The attitude towards the exercise of power can be related to the four styles of leadership, following the typology of John and Cole (1999: 102): the *cooperative* attitudes are present in both the ‘visionary’ and the ‘consensual facilitator’; and the *authoritarian* behaviours can be found in the ‘city boss’ and in the ‘protector’ styles (Figure 2.1).

### *Trends*

Some common traces can be found in the typologies presented above divided in three dimensions: leaders’ attitudes toward change and how they envisage their role; leaders’ relationship with followers; and leaders’ exercise of power and how they exert their influence. The framework that results from these three dimensions lacks two important indicators of leaders’ attitudes towards problem solving and political action, as determinants of leadership styles: their *context awareness* and their *sense of autonomy*.

John and Cole’s (1999) approach to leadership styles in the local governance context, based on the leaders’ adaptation to the complexity of networks, has already addressed this issue and produced a typology of four distinct styles (cf. Figure 2.1): the *visionary*, combining elements of strong leadership with the ability to bring together different actors and establishing effective coordination; the *consensual facilitator*, generating capacity also through persuasion, but less able to produce coherent and autonomous vision and decision-making; the *city boss*, less able to adapt to the complexity of the environment - with complex networks and rapid policy-change - and to anticipate capacity building, but exert his power with strong determination; and the *caretaker*, unable to manage the complex networks and prefers to avoid change.

Cerny (1988) also presented a rather ambitious typology since it included, besides the attitudinal dimension towards change and the relationship with followers, the possibility of leadership style being influenced by one’s autonomy. This autonomy is reflected both in the relations with pressure groups and citizens, and his interpretation of his (in)dependence on other political bodies: from *routine leadership* to *transformative leadership*.

Therefore, a ‘fourth dimension’ with explanatory potential should also be considered as a result of leaders’ perception of their environment, of their institutional constraints, and of their autonomy.



Accordingly to this premise, recent research on mayoral leadership that takes into account the complexity of networks under governance steering, has suggested a shift towards *facilitative* leadership (Svara, 1994). Recognizing the move from government to governance - a context considerably different from the 1970s where most of the here presented leadership models were developed – does not mean that earlier conceptualisations should be discarded (Hambleton, 2005). However, the ‘classical’ typology that distinguishes the *boss* and the *entrepreneurial* styles of leadership, as defined by Yates (1977) - subsequently studied, expanded, refined and sophisticated - is particularly obsolete if we look at the challenges of mature democracies. Their need for a very high access and control over resources to drive governance is particularly difficult in contemporary local government environment (Greasley and Stoker, 2008). Yates (1977) had already suggested this as a consequence of the increasingly demanding local stakeholders and economic power drifting away from their localities. More than being in control, local political leaders are expected to build regimes, facilitate networks and bring stakeholders together, under a common vision for the locality. That is why “the leadership offered by the facilitative style is purposeful and offers the prospect of providing some traction in finding solutions to diverse urban problems and challenges” (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).

Although complex and necessarily incomplete, the exercise above, in which a limited number of aggregate determinants of leadership styles was identified, allows a wider picture of the main trends of the research approaches to this theme. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that these models still have some limitations, with restricted explanatory potential, and – above all – are not able to explain leadership styles’ *trajectories*. These occur when a leader maintains his way of acting in face of context change, or when he voluntarily adapts or modifies it, even though there is no noticeable context alteration.

These *trajectories* require special consideration and must, certainly, include relevant information for political leadership theory.



## 2.6 – Trajectories of political leadership styles

One important question remains to be answered: why does a leader act in a certain way, with a particular style? What explains the difference between the “I am the King. I rule” – from Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King* – and the “No creature among them went upon two legs. No creature called any other creature Master” – from Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. There is a huge difference between these two approaches to political leadership, and two different styles of acting as a leader amongst equals. Explaining political action as a whole is not the purpose of this research and it would be an immense endeavour. Therefore, we will only focus on advancing explanations on the *origins* of political leaders’ action.

Hegel (1979 [1822]) argued that great men would emerge when the situation demanded them. However this does not occur through spontaneous generation and Europe’s twentieth century has shown us that some leaders emerge and, without constraints, they can be extremely harmful. Indeed, explaining why leaders decide to act in a particular way is crucial to our understanding of political leadership.

As explained before, all known approaches to leadership styles tend to reinforce one of two competing determinants: individual characteristics, capabilities and personal conditions; or contextual contingencies, institutional rules, cultural and constitutional settings. Even though each has important explanatory potential, it misses the objective of offering an overall framework which would allow understanding about leadership styles in every individual or contextual condition. For instance, trait and capabilities approaches allow explaining why different leaders perform in their own way, acting even in disparate ways, but it does not explain the reasons that led an individual to change his behaviour when situation alters. On the other, all contextual theories provide important clues to understand this last example, particularly because it allows different styles according to different settings. However it is less accurate when we need to understand why leaders in similar contexts perform rather differently, and present contrasting leadership styles.

All the abovementioned perspectives on leadership styles suffer from the theoretical constriction of having to opt preferably for one of both sides of the underlying ontological game of structure-agency debate (reflected on the previously presented Table 2.1).

The complexity of political leadership demands explanatory models that allow understanding, for instance, why a leader opts for a completely different style when there is no contextual and institutional change, and apparently there has been no personality shift.

Lowndes and Leach (2004), working on local governance issues, produced one of the most interesting and complete approaches to understand leadership styles. They explored the interactions of constitutions (as ‘institutional rules for local political leaders’), contexts (as ‘external institutional environments’) and capabilities (as ‘skills and capacities used by political actors’), explaining how it produced diverse experiences of political leadership. However, even though the referred constraints are there, different individuals would react in different ways, because they can assume each constraint as a restraining factor or as an encouraging dynamic.

Explaining the determinants of different styles and behaviours constitutes a problem. The progression, over the time, of the conceptualisation on this topic led to different approaches to what it meant. As mentioned before, these ranged from trait theory, with a focus on individual characteristics of leadership (Stogdill, 1948), and situational theories, focusing on the impact of the context in which the leader finds himself in (Fiedler, 1967; House & Mitchell, 1970). Lowndes and Leach (2004) research is a good example of this dilemma: personality matters and context matters. Therefore, leaders are influenced by a set of institutional norms and context challenges, by their skills and judgment, and by the incentives created by general rules of governance. Eventually these three dimensions do not determine leadership styles, but they can make particular styles more probable of emerging, as they can influence the leader’s *will*, nurturing him with a particular disposition.

### *The “personal equation”*

Leaders are “persons who exercise control over the behaviour of others [in order] to move them in the desired direction” (Edinger, 1993). Concepts of leadership as the one presented by L. Edinger tend to focus on personal traits, skills and abilities as a method to analyze “the way in which the leader operates” (Leach and Wilson 2000:10). Leach and Wilson followed the same track when characterizing ‘the essence of leadership’ as “the ability to inspire or persuade others to follow a course of action where there is at least some initial resistance to following it” (idem: 11).

While there is strong disagreement in psychology, sociology and political science literature about these issues, there is one widespread agreement on what matters to explain political leadership: *personal characteristics*, which include qualities like vision, charisma,

commitment and strength. As James MacGregor Burns argues, “the study of leadership in general will be advanced by looking at leaders in particular” (Burns, 1978). In fact, examining the conduct and behaviour of known leaders, provides valuable insights on the exercise of leadership (cf. Jones, 1989). On the other hand, although we know that leadership styles are also dependent on the opportunities and constraints determined by the contextual factors (Getimis and Hlepas, 2006), there is no agreement on leadership *contextual determinants*. Stephen Greasley and Gerry Stoker argue that there are three broad factors often used to account for this: “the context in which they operate, the personal skills and capabilities which they bring to their role, and the institutional structure in which they find themselves” (Greasley and Stoker, 2008).

Kearns (1976) based on personal interviews revealed that leader’s autobiographies or biographies allow perceiving the complexity of the psychological motives of their actions. The ‘personal equation’, as Cerny (1988) calls it, reflects this contingent confluence of several factors. Far from representing a psychological definition of innate personality or traits, it claims that personality will confine individual’s potential action in different leadership situations. Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) take the analysis a step further by unpacking the personal characteristics dimension into two parts: *personality* – trait’s characteristics, and *behaviour*. This approach has not vanished from studies on leadership, but has been broadened to consistent patterns of personality (Zaccaro, 2007).

### *The context*

Arising from an increasing awareness of the importance of social networks in the leadership role, more recent studies tended to approach the notion of leadership as more networked dependent and as a distributed process. Leadership is seen as emergent from a group of interacting individuals, rather than from a particular one, as “these new models emphasise the importance of follower participation, democratic involvement and decision-making and make a claim for a less formalised, hierarchical model leadership” (Mandell and Keast, 2007).

However, purely contingencial approaches tend to downplay the distinctiveness of political leadership and its special requirements. Leadership, to use Max Weber’s formulation, rests on personal charisma more than it does on the rational-legal process of policy formation. This fundamentally apolitical concept of political leadership ignores

central and unavoidable concerns such as power over situations and authority over followers.

To use local governance example, as Magnier *et al* (2006) claimed, leaders' behaviour "reflects their personality, their background, their political attitudes; but also the urban system in which they act". In fact, "neither 'organisational biography', nor the importance of locality, should be ignored when analysing local political leadership" (Leach and Wilson, 2008). These contextual factors can facilitate or constraint leader's scope for action (cf. Stewart, 2000). The same kind of causal segments of the interpretative approach is claimed by Lowndes (2002), as she argues that actor's behaviour is shaped by the formal and informal 'rules of the game' provided by institutions: the framework of understanding within which leaders identify, select and decide on what course of action to take. Institutions and the broader environment of governance do not determine the behaviour of political leaders, but they provide a 'skeleton of perceptions'. Contexts shape it as they provide a systematic and rather stable set of constraints and opportunities. Of course, that these actors do not always follow rules but they know that rules exist to provide incentives or hindrances to behaviours, and that they also structure norms of appropriate or unsuitable behaviour. Seeing government as an 'institutional matrix' (North, 1990), rather than an institution itself, provides a stronger framework to understand the importance of these formal and informal rules, which constitute the 'rules-in-use' in a particular governance setting (Leach and Lowndes, 2007). Trying to capture how political leaders account their 'rules-in-use' and how they perform their roles in practice might unveil how context shapes styles of leadership.

### *Leader's Political Will*

As we have seen before, the classical definition of democracy – as Schumpeter (1987) calls it – seems to have forgotten the role of leadership, since its meaning as the self-government of the people, assuming the equality of citizens, excludes leaders. However, representation as a way to achieve and to put in practice the self-rule of a community has raised a rather ambiguous status of leadership in a democratic society (Blondel, 1987). This sets the idea that "there is something inherently undemocratic about the mere fact of leadership" (Plamenatz 1973, 56). After Schumpeter's definition of the

democratic method<sup>6</sup>, it is understandable to put leadership into the centre of the political process, as Weber had already done (Körösenyi, 2007). They both see leaders as political actors with an important component for action: *will*. In contrast, citizens have a particular role in the representative democratic process, “but ordinarily they do not amount to what we call a *will* – the psychic counterpart of purposeful responsible action” (Schumpeter 1987, 261). This is what establishes the autonomy of the political leader: his capacity to understand a particular sense of self-rule that emerges from his special position in the elected bodies of the democracy, not a mere follower of citizens’ wishes and preferences. They have their own vision, strategy, policy-preferences and will. Körösenyi emphasizes this perspective claiming that “it is the political will of leaders that moves political actions, therefore the whole political process” (Körösenyi, 2007).

Similarly, Burns (1978) conceives leadership with three essential elements: it is a purposeful activity, it operates interactively with a body of followers, and it is a form of power (cf. Stone, 1995). The determination, the objective focus and the free-will characteristics of the purposeful activity (in J. Burns definition) opens a new path on our analysis of leaders’ *trajectories*.

Research must, therefore, seek to identify the different effects of the interaction of internal (personal) and external (contextual) factors on leadership styles – an approach already present in Weber’s claims: “Leaders acquire their influence both by virtue of the offices to which they are elected or appointed and because they have the personal capabilities to assert their influence over others: they need to possess both legal-rational and charismatic authority (Weber, 1948)”. This interaction can be advanced through an agent-centred approach, assuming that leadership styles are determined by the leader’s own *will*.

To do this we need to follow a ‘logic of interpretation’ (Parsons, 2007) when analysing political action. As Craig Parsons explains, this perspective claims that “someone arrives at an action only through one interpretation of what is possible and/or desirable” (Parsons, 2007). It doesn’t exclude a more positional explanation of action - as the structural or the institutional ones - but it emphasises that the individual action results from one’s own interpretation of the context - those eventual structural and institutional

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<sup>6</sup> “That institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will” (Schumpeter 1987, 250)

constraints. Furthermore, it is acceptable to consider that all actions have underlying personal motivations (Perez Lopez, 1991). This fits into the broader Parsons' logic of interpretation since it argues that individual understanding of inner and external factors provides purpose for action. All these cognitive, and/or affective and instinctive elements that contribute to organize thinking, lead us to consider leader's actions as the result of his perception about the situation, his intended goals and how to achieve them, having the sufficient resources and power to do it.

Finally, it has to be taken into account that this 'individual interpretation' of the broader context in which he performs can change during the policy processes and can origin mixed leadership styles. It might, even, sometimes undermine the assumption that 'individual will' exclusively explains it. Richard Nixon remembered that: "In politics ... too often the man of thought cannot act and the man of action does not think" (Nixon, 1982). This style deviation can occur, but even then it can be the result of the same rationale: a consequence of the leaders' *will*. Leaders adopt a particular style of leadership because it is the *best way* to act, or because it is the *only possible way* to act, or even because it is the *only way he knows or can act*.

Far from pretending to solve all the problems regarding leadership concept definition and theories, we intend to focus our attention on leadership styles as driven by *political will*, considering that leaders act because they have the *will* to do it, accordingly to the possibilities they discern.

### *Concluding remarks*

Although there is a considerable amount of research that focuses on attempting to explain leadership styles, it is arguable, as seen above, that those determinants would produce all the expected and known styles of leadership. We claim that there must be a mediating cause responsible for these diverse consequences - *political will*. In fact, between the unquestionable explanatory power of these dimensions and the factual actions, individual interpretation must be considered.

We are concerned with political leadership as the process by which individuals attempt to control public policy decisions (Edinger, 1975: 257), therefore focusing on who controls its outcomes, particularly on those individuals who occupy important formal positions of authority. We assume that political leaders do matter. They can shape the

course of a decision process and can make a difference. However, their capacity to shape outcomes must be limited, as individuals are constrained in the extent to which they are able to act freely. Therefore, an interactionist approach is needed to better understand what drives the style of a political leader, and – in order to do this – we need answers to what is and what drives Political Will.

We have initially claimed that literature on political leadership has been overly deterministic, almost exclusively focused on contextual and constitutional constrictions of individual behaviour, relying on institutional and structural explanation of action, or, as in the case of trait theories, predominantly biased by personal capabilities. It also reflects and assumes a general trend towards a more collaborative or facilitative style of leadership as a consequence of contemporary governance tendencies and constraints. Furthermore, scholarship often identifies and recognizes Political Will as having a role in leadership, however does not analyse it, avoiding eventual difficulties and circumventing its potential explanatory capacity. This rich literature with an immense amount of insights has contributed to the development of an important field of research and provided relevant tools for political analysis and for the understanding of leadership. However its main fault, and in fact its inability to offer a more complete understanding of leadership styles, results from the lack of comprehension of the issue of Political Will. By introducing this agent-centred approach to leadership action, emphasizing its intentional and voluntary aspect, we believe to have underlined the need to provide further analysis of Political Will.



## CHAPTER III – WHY POLITICAL WILL MATTERS

*Everyone who actually wills knows: to actually will  
is to will nothing else but the ought of one's existence"*  
Martin Heidegger

### 3.1 – Political will and Leadership

#### *Introduction*

“The political act as an act of will” is the title of an article by Norton E. Long published on the American Journal of Sociology in 1963. This strong and affirmative sentence bears the same primal intuition we felt when addressing the theme of political leadership. As it normally happens with intuitions they are originated in common sense, and this one led us to share the basic assumption that leadership action must be a consequence of the individual's Political Will. Therefore, we expected that by adding *leadership* to Long's title sentence it would still make sense and thus claim that political leaders' actions are – certainly – a result of their *will*. On the article by Long we read:

“President, governor, and mayor are called on to provide programs, acts of will, that focus the attention of the public and legislature on some of the myriad things to which they might attend. They are called on to select from the currently acceptable diagnoses of social problems or, more rarely, to create their own and present them to the public” (Long, 1963: 5-6).

This *act of will* – through which we expect to explain the leader's style – is undoubtedly one of the least explored issues in political science. Although often mentioned in literature as one of the cardinal conditions for effective leadership, it has not been the object of significant and systematic examination. Questions like: what is Political Will? how can it be assessed? and, is it individual or systemic? are still waiting for answers.

We will argue that political leaders are individuals with an important component for action: *will*. This feature is an important particularity of these agents, since, in contrast, although citizens have a particular role in the representative democratic process, “ordinarily they do not amount to what we call a *will* – the psychic counterpart of



purposeful responsible action” (Schumpeter, 1987: 261). This is what establishes the self-rule of the political leader: the capacity to understand a particular sense of autonomy that emerges from his special position in the elected bodies of the democracy, and not a mere follower of the citizens’ wishes and preferences. They have their own vision, strategy, policy-preferences and *will*. Körösenyi emphasizes this perspective claiming “it is the political will of leaders that moves political actions, therefore the whole political process” (Körösenyi, 2007: 1).

Political Will – if understood as stated previously – is a concept of utmost importance to continue being underestimated and victim of scarce research focus.

Diligent purposefulness sometimes compared to determination, or just desire and mere intention<sup>1</sup>, which establishes and determines one’s choices upon a course of political action, are some attributes commonly associated with this puzzling concept of Political Will. There is no generally accepted explanation in social sciences for what stimulates and motivates individuals towards an intentional activity and for the freedom people enjoy to determine their action. As a faculty of the person, as a result of interactions, or as a manifestation of personal motivations to achieve objectives, Political Will has been, and still is, a hazy concept. This determination to pursuit certain purposes or to act accordingly to a particular perspective – willingness – even in the face of strong popular resistance, leads to believe that Political Will might come from the desire to see something done<sup>2</sup>. This is the “slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon” and “the *sine qua non* of policy success which is never defined except by its absence” (Hammergren, 1998: 12).

Our demand for a suitable concept of Political Will, which seemed initially like a huge effort, has swiftly become an effortless endeavour. Academic publications on this issue are scarce, although one can find several references to the term when doing simple word search on regular scholarship repositories – though none with a bounded and solid conceptualization of the issue, and certainly with no attempt to operationalize it. Actually there are very few published articles on Political Will with this concept as its main theme. There are, obviously, several references to the issue, but always as a condition, a pre-requisite, a contextual factor or as a social variable which needs to be nurtured.

<sup>1</sup> We must advert that ‘mere intention’ has here a different sense than the one used further on. It is used as a substitute for “I had a purpose but I didn’t”... sort of weak and inconsequential act or sense.

<sup>2</sup> Kpundeh (1998), on a text about corruption, refers to political will as “the demonstrated credible intent of political actors” (p.92)

Occasionally we found some few attempts to conceptualize it. The most applicable literature on this subject relates to economical development issues and anti-corruption themes. In this context Political Will is considered as a required feature that must be available when introducing pro-development policies, particularly in third-world countries, or as an indispensable condition for fighting corruption, especially when it occurs in the political realm.

It is remarkable to note that Political Will is normally appraised by the negative, like in “there is *no* political will to...” The following quote from Dixit and Londregan appears to capture its spirit: it lacks when “politicians are unable to commit themselves to ignoring political characteristics and making long-term promises to reward economically efficient choices” (Dixit and Londregan, 1995: 856). Intriguingly enough it would be possible to adapt this quote into an affirmative sentence, stating that Political Will is acknowledgeable when political leaders *are able to commit themselves*. However the quoted author preferred to use the negative form, reinforcing the ‘lack of Political Will’ approach. Paul P. Streeten, who appears to strongly disapprove the use of this phrase, suggests that the “expression should be banned from political discourse” (Streeten, 1995: 228). Nevertheless he claims it should be subjected to “analysis, and, for purposes of action, to pressures and mobilization” (ibidem).

In literature the expression of Political Will is more a rhetorical than an analytic concept, and it is often seen as a device employed by political leaders to emphasise their credibility with citizens, or by citizens when asking for government’s action. If in the first case the concept is used as a powerful tool to suggest reliability (i.e. the leader has enough Political Will to conduct the expected policies), authority (i.e. the leader is in the position to use his Political Will), consistency (i.e. the leader’s Will is in accordance with the people), or even to produce commitment (i.e. the leader uses Political Will as a rhetorical tool to motivate citizens); in the second case, the concept is frequently – if not always – used as a translation of a collectively identified absent behaviour from the political leader or nonexistent policies from a particular institution or from the state (i.e. people *ask for* Political Will).

Assuming that it is not just a truism to say that political leaders need Political Will, there are questions that remain to be answered: what is it?; whose political will?; and how is it shaped?

*Perspectives and dimensions*

We can identify three main perspectives on Political Will: (1) as a societal force; (2) as an institutional capacity; and (3) as an individual ‘strength’. For each of them different answers are given to our previous questions:

- (1) As a societal force, Political Will is a collective endeavour that results from a shared commitment to put pressure on strategic agents to change or reinforce a particular policy;
- (2) As an institutional capacity, Political Will is the organizational aptitude resulting from its norms and rules that enables it to accomplish predetermined objectives;
- (3) As an individual strength, Political Will is a form of commitment and intentionality that is translated into purposeful actions to attain preset goals.

Our interest is on political leaders and on how Political Will shapes their style of leadership, thus focusing exclusively on the individual approach. Even though this argument would be enough to overlook the first two perspectives, they are too important to avoid when trying to obtain a clear and objective definition of the concept.

We consider both perspectives not as Political Will but as ‘ingredients’ that interact with the main agent – the only one capable of generating and exercising Political Will: the individual<sup>3</sup>. In fact, in the case of regarding at Political Will as a collective endeavour one is diverting the focus to an eventual driving force - organized citizens – that might put pressure on the individuals or political institutions that would, finally, implement the desired strategies. Nevertheless, this way of looking at Political Will as this societal force is a common approach, particularly when one claims, for instance, “there was enough political will to fight corruption” bearing in mind that it resulted from a collective effort. However one could state the same assuming it resulted from the correct institutional

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<sup>3</sup> Acknowledging that this perspective requires an important attention to the contemporary *structure-agency debate*, we must recognize that we owe our approach mainly to Schütz’s Theory of Action. This issue will be addressed further on.

arrangement and organizational capacity to execute the required strategy. This constitutes what we called the second approach to Political Will – the institutional capacity. However, once again we are not focusing on the driving force, but rather on the possibilities, leading us to refuse to incorporate this perspective on a wider concept of Political Will.

Nevertheless, these ‘ingredients’ can perform an important role on the process required to ‘activate’ Political Will. When we consider the possibility of generating a sort of collective commitment towards a particular policy change, we argue that this societal ‘force’ might be able to influence decision makers, institutional arrangements and rules-in-use. The opportunity to influence other’s *intentions* must certainly be taken into account when trying to unveil the sources of Political Will. The same rationale applies to the previously explained institutional approach. When we argue the necessity of a certain set of conditions in order to allow the achievement of a particular goal, we are considering, for instance, the required institutional arrangements that make policy implementation possible. Therefore, the state of affairs that permit converting desires, wishes, and intentions into objective and observable actions must also be considered when we seek for understanding the concept of Political Will.

If, in the first case we are speaking of the eventual *origins* of the intentionality to act, in the second one we are focusing on what *allows* the possibility to act. These two perspectives – societal and institutional - are not by themselves complete definitions of Political Will, but they both draw attention to two important aspects of the concept.

It is here important to draw a line between Political Will and ‘political capacity’. Often used with the same sense, these are two different concepts. Our approach to Political Will must encompass capacity as one of its fundamental dimensions, since we argue that *possibility* is one of its main aspects. Capacity is understood here as one necessary condition for a leader to build Political Will, and its absence might contribute to explain the lack of leader’s willingness to engage in a particular action.

#### *Falsification and assessment*

This concept is even more treacherous than we first assumed because it can be “falsified”. In fact, it is difficult to imagine a political leader to express their unwillingness to act accordingly to an expected outcome like, for instance, fighting crime. Expressing indifference or – worse – support towards commonly unaccepted behaviours would be a

way of declaring loudly their intention to be “sacked” from office. Although no objective action is taken in order to produce an expected result – like preventing anti social behaviour – it is still possible for a political leader to express his complete and resolute dedication to fight for the implementation of necessary policies. The international arena gives us good examples of this discrepancy. With no particular real situation in mind, it is possible to find cases where this occurs. For instance when international funding for developing countries is at stake, demanding from the national political class and from the public servants elite important commitments in order to change certain aspects of their functioning, these can easily be translated into promises and written agreements but with no actual results – not by contingency, but due to inactivity.

Political Will cannot be assessed by textual analysis of public statements, or else we would certainly discover that all holders of political positions have ‘colossal’ Political Will. On the other hand, assessing it through their supported actions and policies would introduce the problem of *post hoc* circular explanatory arguments (Brinkerhoff, D. 2000: 241): Political Will’s definition would be in reference to its assessment and measurement.

To avoid this trap we need to understand the genesis of Political Will and comprehend what elicits it. If we understand what drives Political Will the advantages are obvious, since it will allow us to explain: (1) when it is absent and why; (2) how does it express itself; (3) how does it explain leadership, and – as we expect – (4) why do political leaders adopt different styles of leadership.

#### *Conceptualizing – controversies, advantages and challenges*

Developing an improved knowledge of what Political Will entails may help efforts to better understand and explain politics, governance arrangements and political actors’ engagement in the *public sphere*. In fact, paraphrasing Keith Grint’s thought on leadership, “It would be strange if [political will] was the only human skill that could not be enhanced through knowledge and practice” (Grint, 1997: 2). Following this appeal, we intend to examine political leadership styles and the role of Political Will in its formation. We are particularly interested in understanding what constitutes Political Will and what contributes the most to shape it, recognizing that the quarrels about this concept is a recurring but vital theme in political leadership studies, and that such differences are unlikely to disappear.

The concept of Political Will has been controversial throughout its history, for reasons that go beyond political science's matters. The controversy also transcends knowledge of the subject, and it is not centred on the basic fact of *will* but on certain consequences, such as the importance of leadership and especially the relevance of politics to human affairs. Among these discussions, there are also intellectual positions most fiercely opposed to each other with particular perspectives on how to explain individual behaviour and choices. These sides are different from each other but united in their commitment to the idea that individuals have enormous flexibility in what they can become exercising their free will.

This is not the place to rehearse all the arguments as whether individuals have innate will or if they develop it; if action is inner-driven or externally influenced; or even, if there are biological fatalistic reasons at stake<sup>4</sup>. To do so would be virtually to write the history of western philosophy again and would ask for unachievable theoretical and research competencies. The aim of our research is not to enter the “no way back” downhill discussion about *will* as a philosophical matter. In fact, the discussion is about a particular feature of *will* – ‘political’ *will*.

We believe that this endeavour will help address some of the several questions that remain unanswered about the exercise of leadership. Those about context: why do some leaders succeed in one context and fail in another? Would Churchill appear outstanding as a leader if for the particular circumstances of the Second World War? Or Giuliani without the 9/11? Or Mandela without apartheid? And those about behaviour: why do we witness leadership style changes when political leaders change? Why do different individuals engage in different styles of relationship with followers? What contributes better to understand leaders' political action besides traditional approaches to leadership like personal trait or social / legal position?

One of the most interesting truths about the exercise of leadership is the fact that even when apparently there are no contextual changes, leaders behave differently. Then, when customary and rehearsed explanations fail we turn to a safer justification: the well-known panacea of the so-called Political Will – *No reason! Then explain it with political*

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<sup>4</sup> Although we share these concerns with the complexity of the theme, minimum standards of agreement are required in order to have a solid and defensible argument on the conceptualization of Political Will. For that reason – further on this chapter – we will address the issues of intentionality and agency. This intends to contribute to the clarification of the complexity of the theme of Political Will.

*will!* The problem is that Political Will is an empty concept, a residual “catch-all” for things that cannot be explained by other elements in the analysis. This is unacceptable and this research aims at promoting an understanding of Political Will that can be operationalized and employed in empirical studies on leaders in action.

We intend to develop a non-judgemental approach to this issue, avoiding any normative claims, since it is not our concern to explore a particular facet of the question ‘*why* Political Will occurs’: in what direction it is used, for personal interests or for other reasons. We do not believe that all political leaders are characters from Handel’s Agrippina – moved only by greed, but we do not exclude this behaviour. However, we are not interested in the specific personal motives that might explain *why* Political Will occurs (avoiding therefore the normative debate), but in *how* it occurs (presenting a comprehensible framework that allows researchers to advance in studying political leadership). More than explaining we seek understanding.

The question of *how* do political leaders compel themselves or are compelled to act, more than *what* lies behind these particular force for action, is the crucial issue in political leadership studies. As Robert Tucker claims, leaders matter “a little more, a little less, depending on how they diagnose problem situations for their political communities, what responses they prescribe for meeting them, and how they mobilize the political community’s support for their decision” (Tucker, 1995: 30). These relevant agents can be extremely powerful, and even though they do not control all events and constraints they might be able to “anticipate them and bend them to their purpose to some degree” (Gibbon, 2002). Besides being in the position to, they are also able to act accordingly to different strategies, choosing between several options and *moving* in the political realm using very different styles.

Our central argument is that political leadership styles are a consequence of the leaders’ Political Will. Factual and concrete leadership exercises are important sources of evidence for this claim.

### **3.2 – History and leader’s biographies: a source of evidence**

Max Weber divided the sources of authority into three types: traditional, charismatic and legal-bureaucratic. It would be rather simple to expect that these would correspond straightforward to three types of leaders: the traditional leader owing his power



to a particular historical and social setting that would allow him to be the owner of kind of symbolic authority; the charismatic one, whose power to lead results from his own personal attributes and capacities; and the bureaucratic one, to whom command was given by his legal prescribed powers. However authority is not always immediately translated into leadership. Especially it is not promptly converted into a way of exercising leadership. As we claimed before<sup>5</sup>, there is an important difference between headship and leadership. An individual could occupy a traditional or a bureaucratically relevant position and nevertheless fail to be a leader. All the more it is also acceptable to find great leaders without any charisma (Elliot, 2009). So, what really counts when explaining leadership, and mostly what explicates the different leadership styles? We believe that the answer resides on Political Will.

Different political leaders' biographies help us to reinforce this perspective. In the words of Barry Gustafson, "history and biography will continue to provide many of the case studies on which a more sophisticated interdisciplinary analysis is based" (Gustafson, 2008: 110). As suggested by Bernard Bass, "from its infancy, the study of history has been the study of leaders – what they did and why they did it" (Bass, 2007: 3).

Political biographies are an example of these complex set of aspects that drive Political Will. For instance, Margaret Thatcher quotes the eighteenth-century British Prime-Minister Chatham, who remarked, "I know that I can save this country and that no one else can". In her autobiography, she wrote, "I must admit that my exhilaration came from a similar inner conviction" (Downing Street Years, p.10). To associate a propensity to act as a leader and to bring into being significant changes to an interior – sort of 'soul based' – moral commitment is quite usual.

Another example comes from Bill Clinton's political advertisement for his campaign for the presidency in 1992: "Now it's exhilarating to me to think that as president I could help to change all our people's lives for the better and bring hope back to the American dream" (quoted in Westen, 2007: 52). Again the same manifestation of *force*, this time clearly linked with a particular sense of capability associated to the position assumed in office. Besides *willing* there is also a sense of *ability*.

What drives an individual to assume such discourse, revealing intent to produce change, and assuming he has the power to do it? To say 'I'm in position to' is clearly

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<sup>5</sup> In Chapter II



different from ‘I have the will to...’ There is something powerful behind Political Will that does not come from merely occupying an elected or appointed position, but from the “exercise of influence in the pursuit of goals” (Levine and Kaufman, 1974) – the important distinction between *headship* and *leadership*. Alternatively, as Joseph Nye puts it, “holding a formal leadership position is like having a fishing license; it does not guarantee you will catch any fish” (Nye, 2008: 11).

Hegel argued that great men would emerge when the situation demanded them. However, this does not occur through spontaneous generation and Europe’s twentieth century has shown us that some leaders emerge and, without constraints, they can be extremely harmful. Adolf Hitler on his Landsberg speech, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November of 1925, said that “If freedom is short of weapons, we must compensate with willpower” (quoted in Kershaw, 2010). *Will* was frequently used as an important argument for the Nazi propaganda. It was the Arian nation’s endeavour – personified by its Führer and his unbreakable will – to fulfil an historical and mythical enterprise: to lead a great empire. Actually this was very clear in Leni Riefenstahl’s choice of title for a film about Hitler – “Triumph of the will”.

Winston Churchill is another example, although very different. Described by many historians as one of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century, at the beginning of 1940 he was widely regarded as an unimportant backbench member of parliament (cf. Gilbert, 2000). What happened after that that might contribute to understand his role in history? “Churchill did not change; the context changed”, argues Nye (2008). Indeed, explaining why individuals in a set of headship decide to act in a particular way is important to explain leader’s emergence, and crucial to our understanding of leadership styles. But, where did his Political Will come from?

These two widely divergent styles of leadership both gathered followers and mobilized thousands. Probably also different kinds of followers as suggested elsewhere: “Charismatic leaders like Hitler need non-sceptics to follow him; inspirational leaders like Churchill will always have followers even though sceptics” (Roberts, 2004). But it is true that some respectful working middle class Germans became genocidal murderers and the proud-of-their-individuality British hold together in a national effort to avoid invasion, so many times urged by one non consensual prime-minister.

Both were effective and had unquestionable strong Political Will, but with resulting different leadership styles. So, what drives Political Will? Does the availability of resources and contextual favourable settings drive the willingness to act, or vice versa? Are there any distinctions – as Hitler's and Churchill's leadership histories appear to reveal – between different leaders' Political Will?

In order to start unveiling the concept of Political Will we need to address its inner complexity, which derives from the debate on human action.

### 3.3 – On human action and intentionality

The relative neglect of Political Will in the political science field might be related to the view that free will constitutes a serious problem to social scientists. Since Modernity reason has been acknowledged as the source of good choices and explanation in political life. As Mumford (1963) noted, in western philosophy emotionality has been identified with irrational behaviours. This emphasis on reason, strengthened with the assumption that the world is ordered and built in ways that allow powerful and generalized explanations, has handicapped us in the examination of more complex, inherently human, not only rational phenomena like Political Will. This is not to say that broader factors do not influence political action, but as Kingdon (1984) pointed out about policy-processes, they are dependent not only on opportunities for action but also on the *willing* to take advantages of those opportunities and to act accordingly. When focusing on policy, governance and leadership we must, certainly, re-centre research spotlights and give a meticulous attention on human action, on their motivations, intentions and identities.

In “The Human Condition” Hannah Arendt (1958) stated that it is in action that people show *who* they are and actively reveal their personal and singular identities. It is this revelation of *who* – and not of *what* – that emerges from action. This unveiling quality is only visible when people are with others (in relation with, *pro* or against). The *Polis* is by inherence the realm of human *relations* and *actions*. We will follow this argument, claiming that *human action* – as a ‘revelation’ of the ‘being’ – must be a consequence of individual *will*.

Our further purpose in the considerations to follow will be to give the foundations which have hitherto lacked in order to establish the basic assumptions behind individuals’

action. In this process we will be touching upon the work of two main authors who made the problem of human action the focus of their studies: Alfred Schütz, the socio-hermeneutist to whom we already owe important contributions, and Ludwig von Mises, one of the most interdisciplinary influencing scholars of the twentieth century.

*Motivations - ‘mechanisms’ and ‘filters’*

To explain human action we often rely on what Jon Elster (2007) calls *mechanisms*, those “frequently occurring and easily recognizable causal patterns that are triggered under generally unknown conditions or with intermediate consequences” (Elster 2007:36). These mechanisms allow explanation, but not prediction, since they rely on interpretation of actions, requiring from the interpreter the clarification in terms of the antecedent beliefs and desires of the agent (idem: 63). The referred author focuses much of his attention on motivations for action, stating that they result from *reason*, *passion* and/or *interest*. His quote from the New York chancellor Livingston 1783 letter to Alexander Hamilton is a good example of this approach:

“I seriously lament with you, the violet spirit of persecution which prevails here and dread its consequences upon the wealth, commerce & future tranquillity of the state. I am the more hurt at it because it appears to me almost unmixed with *purser patriotic motives*. In some few it is a blind spirit of *revenge & resentment*, but in more it is the most *sordid interest*” (idem: 79).

In his analysis of human motivation, Pérez López (1991) also suggested three basic forms that would result from different incentives: extrinsic, intrinsic and transcendental or relational. We can consider extrinsic incentives those that emerge from the environment and/or others; intrinsically motivated action, which results from the desire of doing something; and relational that derive from moral or ethically oriented grounds. However, a person will act not as a result of a particular motivation but will act out of a combination of these three motives.

Often, all motivational explanations also tend to follow the same path. Theories of motivation can be grouped in three broad categories: the individual’s predisposition

(content theories), the cognitive process (process theories), and consequences deriving from the individual's action (outcome theories). The first focus on factors internal to the individual in order to explain why people are motivated in different ways and by different settings (ex: Maslow, 1954; Alderfer, 1972; McClelland, 1965, Herzberg, 1959; Hackman and Oldham, 1975). The second tries to explain how people initiate, direct and maintain their motivation (ex: Adam's 1965, equity theory; Folger and Greenberg's, 1985 procedural justice theory; Vroom's, 1964 expectancy theory; Bandura's, 1977, 1986 social learning or social cognitive theory). Because of the interaction with the environment, the person's expectations are subject to a continuous learning process based on direct experience. The third seeks to explain which types of consequences motivate different people to work (ex: Skinner's reinforcement theory)

Returning to Elster's (2007) approach on human action we can consider that its motivational aspects are condensed under the term *mechanisms*, which would consist on one of the two *filters* that determine which action the individual will assume (Elster, 2007: 165). The first *filter* results from the assumption that the agent has the capacity and possibility to choose between different actions, which will have the best consequences (an agent centred approach). The second filter would be made of all the constraints faced by the agent – physical, legal, institutional, economical, and others. These constraints would constitute the opportunity set for action (ibidem). Structuralism in social sciences would agree that constraints have a determinant effect on choice, leaving little or eventually no scope for it<sup>6</sup>.

The problem with these two *filters* for a social scientist is the same as for Heisenberg's uncertainty principle – to whom certain pairs of properties cannot be known at the same time. The same occurs with constraints and choice: if we focus exclusively on structures, like the social networks to which an agent is tied, we will certainly be less able to evaluate the individuality dimension. On the other hand, focusing exclusively on the agent choices and motivations, we will lose the necessary information from the eventual constraints that filtered his choice.

It is required to go beyond this impasse in order to better understand what lies behind human action. We follow the scholarship that claims that this dualistic perspective was overcome by the phenomenological approach, mainly due to its core assumption:

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<sup>6</sup> This structure-agent debate will be addressed further on.

*action is intentional*. Every action is a spontaneous activity oriented towards the future (Schütz, 1972: 57), containing in itself intentionalities of lived experience (Husserl, 1977 [1929]).

### *Intentionality*

Accordingly to Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* 7-9, what gives an object its identity is what it does, its purpose or characteristic activity: its *ergon*. Human actions – and regarding our research focus, those ‘acts of leadership’ – are an *ergon* since they *are* because of *their* purpose. This is clearly the case of leaders’ action – or of what we have been calling leadership styles – since it only exists because the individual (the leader) acts. Being an *ergon* means that human action is ultimately a purposeful and goal oriented activity. Quoting Korsgaard (2009: 96), “This sense of intelligent movement already implies that an action has intentional content”, or as Schütz (1972: 41) declares: action has a voluntary nature.

The key notion in much theory of action has been that of acting intentionally. The opposite would lead to consider the agent as merely an arena of events that left him with an alienated role. With a small degree of self-determination, individuals would be left with the mere role of *moving* accordingly to the hands of an unknown puppeteer. Our approach follows the rich scholarship that claims individuals as possessing or exercising some kind of relevant capacity to deliberately *move*. As recalled by Hornsby (2004: 1), quoting Michael Smith:

“Actions are bodily movements that are caused and rationalized by an agent’s desire for an end and a belief that moving her body in the relevant way will bring that end about”.

The concept of intentionality has a long history and played an important role in medieval scholastic epistemology. Its modern revival is due to Brentano’s work:

“Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously,

reference to a content, direction toward an object [...]” (Brentano 1973: 88)

This so called “intentionality passage” from Franz Brentano is one of the most influential in contemporary philosophy, from Husserl’s phenomenology to much of the twentieth century philosophers on meaning and agency.

Intentionality is a “generic term for the *pointing-beyond-itself*, proper to consciousness (from the Latin *intendere*, which means to aim in a particular direction, similar to drawing and aiming a bow at a target)” (Gallagher and Zahavi 2008: 109). In this sense agency depends on the agent’s consciousness of agency, that is, the person is only an agent if he knows he has intentionally caused something to happen. Therefore, this *sense of agency* involves a “pre-reflective awareness of what I am doing as I am doing it, or it may involve a more explicit consciousness filled with well-developed reasons” (idem: 158).

But intentionality should not be confused with *having an intention to act*, which is associated with the concept of will. *Will* in this sense is the *potential* to act, that has not become yet – or will never become – an ‘intentionality’. *Will* – or to avoid confusing terms with our main theme (Political Will), *intention* – should be only one part of the intentional action, its pre-requisite. So, human action – whose focus is demanded by our work on leadership styles – goes beyond pure *intention*, and represents a conscious and intentional act. It is still necessary to understand what is there beyond *intention* that allows action to exist – to become a concrete and objective reality.

As Anscombe states,

“Intentional actions are a sub-class of the events in a man’s history which are known to him *not* just because he observes them, [...being] the ones to which the question ‘Why?’ is given application.” The answer to the question ‘Why?’ is an expression of intention: “a description of something future in which the speaker is some sort of agent, which description he justifies by reasons for acting” (Anscombe, 1963: 24).

*Intention* is expressed when the answer to the question – why? – is a straightforward mention of something future: a state of affairs the agent thinks “it will or may be brought about by the action about which he is being questioned” (idem: 35).

The fact that human action necessarily involves anticipation (*Vorerinnerung* in Husserl’s words) or foreseeing expectation, in the sense that an action is future-oriented, has been clearly stated by Husserl:

“In every action we know the goal in advance in the form of an anticipation that is “empty”, in the sense of vague, and lacking its proper “filling-in”, which will come with fulfilment. Nevertheless we strive toward such a goal and seek by our action to bring it step by step to concrete realization” (Husserl, 1977: 149).

Even though “our wills have no power at all to make our effects be the ones that we will” (Korsgaard, 2009: 87), individuals have the faculty to *anticipate* the aims of an action, because, accordingly to Heidegger (1962: 185), an action always has “the nature of a project” (*Entwurfcharakter*). However, Schütz (1972: 59) reminds us that “every projection of action is rather a phantasying of action”, not being the activity itself. Therefore there cannot be any degree of certainty on the achievement of the projected aims of the action, since it will not depend exclusively on the individual’s *intent*.

For Alfred Schütz those projected aims are the *act* – the goal of the action, as for *action* he referred to it as what brings the *act* into being (idem: 60). The *act* is certainly an uncertainty for the uncontrolled factors we mentioned, as it is for the path one needs to take to achieve it (the *action*). “Action is the execution of a projected act”, states Schütz (idem: 61), which can correspond to a set of intermediate goals planned to get to the final objective (the *rational* or *purposive* action). This enlarges the complexity and the difficulty to guarantee the completion of the *act*, as projected.

Therefore, if we strip away all the metaphysical speculations which have surrounded *Will*, we are left with a “voluntary activity based on previously formulated objectives” (idem: 66). *Will*, from the phenomenological analysis of its experience, is the *peculiar fiat* by which the projected *act* is carried into *action*.



We considered *action* to be guided by a *telos* – an inherent end of a projected future. However we should not straightforwardly conclude that human action is driven by a simple utilitarian logic. This *telos* is also an *archê* – in Hannah Arendt’s (1958) sense, something that is in the beginning and ‘makes things start’. The *intent* for action is, at the same time, *archê* and *telos*. Individuals *intend to* engage in actions because they are motivated to do so, based both on their inner motives (*pre* action) and an imagined future (*post* action). This difference is important because it brings about two kinds of motives:

“the in-order-to motive explains the act in terms of the project, while the genuine because-motive explains the project in terms of the actor’s past experiences” (Schütz, 1972: 91).

This rational and conscious choice to achieve a projected act – as Schütz defines action drawing after Husserl’s phenomenology – is one important step to our understanding of what human action entails. If the distinctions between *intent*, *act* and *action* are clearer and will help us better develop the concept of Political Will, it is still necessary to comprehend what we mean and which are the consequences of rational and conscious behaviours. This second class of topics include the problems of choice and freedom, and can be included under the general heading of “voluntary action”.

#### *Voluntary action and uncertainty*

“Voluntary action is the criterion of meaningful behaviour” (Schütz, 1972: 66), being its meaning given by choice – the freedom to behave as one opts to. This is the distinctive approach in which *praxeology* rests. The term, made known particularly through the work of the Austrian sociologist-economist Ludwig von Mises, conveys a fundamental axiom: the primordial fact that individuals engage in conscious actions towards chosen goals. An axiom that relates closely with our previous statements.

Praxeology has a long tradition, particularly in economic thought. The nineteenth century French economist Jean-Baptiste Say regretted that people

“suppose that absolute truth is confined to the mathematics and to the results of careful observation and experiment [...] imagining that [...]



political sciences contain no invariable facts of indisputable truth, and therefore cannot be considered as genuine sciences, but merely hypothetical systems” (quoted in Rothbard 1977: 35).

So, in contrast to the natural sciences, in praxeology it is imprudent to oversimplify the premises, reducing the observable – as stated by Say – “by means of simplifications, and arbitrary suppressions, of which the consequences, not properly estimated, always essentially change the conditions of the problem” (idem: 36). This is an apparent reference to contemporary positivists, arguing that mathematics and statistics do not provide the proper method, but only the use of *Verstehen*, “the intuitive quickness of an enlightened understanding” (Say, quoted in Rothbard, 1977: 36).

As Murray N. Rothbard puts it, praxeology “is the structure of logical implications of the *fact* that individuals act” (idem: 58). As a logical consequence this implies that human behaviour is purposive, and that the individual has consciously chosen certain goals and the means to reach them. In this sense, those goals, as a result from an intentional choice, must be valued by the individual. Rothbard asserts that:

“Praxeology does not assume that a person’s choice of values or goals is wise or proper or that he has chosen the technologically correct method of reaching them. All that praxeology asserts is that the individual actor adopts goals and believes, whether erroneously or correctly, that he can arrive at them by the employment of certain means” (idem: 59).

An important result from this axiom is the fact that all actions, being directed towards a valued goal, will result, or at least expect to result, in a state of affairs that is preferable to the individual when compared to his starting point. It is the uncertainty of the *real world* and its outcomes that leads individuals to act – there is no “omniscient knowledge of the future” (ibidem). Even though the conscious engagement in an action does not necessarily leads to the projected future, individuals continue to develop the effort to tackle with real life contingencies.

Other important fact to take into account is the scarcity of resources that individuals have to face when employing them to reach the chosen goals. Scarcity and non-control of

resources are two important dimensions that contribute to the imponderability of human action, and ultimately of human existence. Only uncertainty can explain freedom. Else, complete and accurate prediction of the future would lead to no need for action. We would loose our *ergon*.

One important feature of praxeology is that it is a *subjectivist* value theory, being its purpose the study of the repercussions of *given* values. It recognizes that, in the words of Jörg Hülsmann:

“[H]uman decisions are made under the impact of the subjective values cherished by the decision-maker, and that these values may be “rational” (reflecting objectively the best interest of the decision-maker) from some point of view, but may also appear emotive, irrational, short-sighted, etc. from other points of view” (Hülsmann, 2003: xxv).

That is to say, individuals need to choose between alternative ends and means to achieve these ends. Once the choice is made the project requires a clear shape of a purposeful intermediate path to attain the end – it configures the *how to* of the action.

Accordingly to Gabriel Zanotti,

“based on Menger’s subjective theory of value, from Mises’s strong methodological individualism to Hayek’s essay, “Scientism”, it might be stated that the commitment with finalistic action of the subject, as the explanatory core of the economic theory, has remained in force in this school of thought” (Zanotti 2007: 115).

The same author states that F. A. Hayek is the one “who reaches the highest peak of this subjectivism” (idem: 116), quoting the Austrian economist:

- (1) “It is probably no exaggeration to say that every important advance in economic theory during the past hundred years was a further step in the consistent application of subjectivism” (ibidem)

- (2) “the objects of economic activity cannot be defined in objective terms but only with reference to a human purpose [...], nor food or money can be defined in physical terms but only in terms of views people hold about things” (ibidem)

Asserting that individual action does not deal with physical objects but with intentions and ideas, could lead to the dangerous pitfall that both Mises and Hayek tried to avoid (cf. Zanotti: 116). Their nonrelativistic hermeneutics was a way of “*providing a universal meaning* to social phenomena” (idem). Husserl was aware of the fact that the *lifeworld*, the world of life where structures are formed and shape our co-existence (Aranzadi *et al*, 2009: 22), is essentially an intersubjective world, and that it is human interactions through its voluntary and intentional purposes which give sense to the social phenomena. This provides an ontology that could serve our research purposes.

Therefore praxeology intends to deal with all choices and values, not only with the “rational” ones. As Mises would argue, choice, as an essential feature of human action, is also the foundation of the phenomenon of value. In brief, Mises alerts for the implications of the employment of means to trying to attain chosen and values goals. Praxeology, then, urges us to deal with the fact that individuals act voluntarily through the choice of valued goals.

It still leaves a lot of *space* for the question of its *content*: the content of values, actions and goals.

#### *Action and interpretation*

It is the content of the action<sup>7</sup> that Schütz pursued, asking: “what possible meanings did the actors connect with these actions which present themselves to us, the observers, as courses of social phenomena?” (Schütz, 1972: 61).

The complexity of the interaction between the individual, other persons and their context was elaborated by Alfred Schütz’s *Verstehen* or ‘interpretive understanding’: “[the

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<sup>7</sup> “Nam in omni actione principaliter intenditur ab agente, sive necessitate naturae sive voluntarie agat, propriam similitudinem explicare; [...] Nihil igitur agit nisi tale existens quale patiens fieri debet” [For in every action what is primarily intended by the doer, whether he acts from actual necessity or out of free will, is the disclosure of his own image. [...] Thus, nothing acts unless by acting it makes patent its latent self] in Dante Alighieri’s “*Monarchia*” as quoted and translated by Arendt (1958: 175)

individual] must be aware of and interpret the meaning of the other's behaviour" (idem: 16). Interpretation in this sense – and owing a definitional approach to Husserl's phenomenology – can be understood as the knowledge each individual has of his *lifeworld*.

Alfred Schütz established that the knowledge people employ in their actions results from their interpretation of the world, giving the "knowledge at hand" (Schütz, 1962b:7) that results from direct and indirect experiences. It is this "scheme of references" that frames individual's expectations or desires, as well as the way to achieve them (the action *plan*). Choosing is, therefore, a process of deliberation or, as Dewey claimed, "a dramatic rehearsal in imagination of various competing possible lines of action... It is an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses to see what the resultant action would be like if it were entered upon" (quoted in Schütz 1962c: 68).

This *projecting*, as Schütz called it, designs the potential course of action the individual chooses to follow – a plan to bring about a certain state of affairs. For Schütz, individuals act *in order to* achieve a desired goal – what St. Thomas Aquinas called *finis operantis* (the ultimate intention of the person). However, although choice is always more or less creative (Koppl 2001: 185), in Schütz analysis, both the *act* (the end pursued) and *action* (the means chosen to get there) are "typically familiar" to the chooser. The willingness to achieve a particular goal through a certain path follows previous experiences and emerges from past actions – constituting the *because-motive*.

Therefore although deliberation is at hand, and people conceive the various possible strategies to bring about the projected future, this is not always a completely new situation or a *terra incognita*. This will be the result of the experiences performed in the past under similar circumstances. Even though this would mean that choice can become a simple thing – which would contradict the problematic dimension of choosing in real life – the fact is that also knowledge changes, and particularly, people's *interpretation* of their *lifeworld* also changes. No unique event occurs.

Interestingly, *will* has not become a sociological concept, rather social theorists have instead invoked other arguments as sources of non-deterministic agent-driven world: people follow ideas and values and act on the basis of their understanding of the situation, which can diverge from the objectively existing conditions. As William Thomas said, "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928: 572).

Hermeneutics is here a useful tool in order to attempt to understand the purpose of the act “in terms of the internal perceptions and beliefs of the person who performed it” (Koppl and Whitman 2004: 3). It is this process of “understanding”, as “the process of recognizing a mental state from a sense-given sign by which it is expressed” (Dilthey quoted in Koppl and Whitman, 2004: 296) that enables us to relate social phenomena to the internal perceptions of the individuals.

The main advantage of the theories based on action, which Giddens (1987) called “theories of the mundane”, is that they take into consideration that people understand the conditions and act intentionally, choosing their course of action based on their own reasons and motives (Giddens 1987: 59). This is where Alfred Schütz sees social science as aiming “to form objective concepts and objectively verifiable theory of subjective meaning structures” (Schütz 1963: 246), building models of typical actions.

The purpose is to make the world intelligible in terms of human motivations, expectations, desires and intentions – an uncertain world of possibilities and opportunities to choose. As Norton Long states, Political Will is an act of the “creation of a stable definition of the situation out of the manifold uncertainties of the reality masked by common sense” (Long, 1963: 6).

Although the apparent mist that covers this concept, it does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, it is the manifestation of a complex set of circumstances, which include leaders’ beliefs, skills, aspirations and expected support or resistance from others. In democratic societies, Political Will also derives from shared understandings and opinions.

It is not simple to draw a plain and objective framework of the human motivations without recognizing their inner complexities, inconsistencies and doubts. Each individual is always an enigma, and although their actions can be studied, its causes are still under a difficult veil of shadows. Every psychology school tells us that human motivations, particularly on the world of politics, are extremely difficult to unveil. Thus, Political Will is an especially hard field to explore, but of undoubted importance to explain leadership styles and leaders’ actions. This intentional approach fits into the broader Parsons’ (2007) logic of interpretation since it is mostly an individual understanding of inner and external factors that provides purpose for action.

### 3.4 – The structure-agency debate

An action requires an agent, someone to whom we attribute the authorship of a particular movement. But, as we have quoted before, Korsgaard states that even though “our wills have no power at all to make our effects be the ones that we will” (Korsgaard, 2009: 87) individuals still anticipate (in an Husserlian perspective) future results of their actions. However, their *sense of agency* (Gallagher and Zahavi 2007: 158) depends on the extent they believe their actions will by themselves produce or influence the anticipated or projected future. Because individuals and, in fact, “political leaders operate as wild cards between the realm of ideas and the material conditions which surround them” (Johansson 2004:3), it is imprudent to skip those *external* factors from the human action equation.

This particular feature of *will* – Political Will – directs our attention towards the ‘surroundings’ of the political actor. As Schütz reminds, action is always in *relation with* and results from inter-subjectivity. Structure-agency debate resides exactly in this permanent tension: which is more determinant for the result of the individual’s free choice (if even freedom is possible) of the course of action to take.

We have been referring to the logical impossibility to guarantee that *projected future* – goals and preferences – that leads individuals to select the course of *action* will be effectively attained. All the uncontrolled and contingent aspects of life need to be taken into account when considering which features determine the success of one’s action. Individuals evaluate to some degree their *conditions* to achieve that goal, relying on the perception one has of those states of affairs, or on previous experiences. However it is impossible to separate an appreciation of *external* settings from one’s own determination, willing and desires. Actually when we evaluate or appreciate something, our brain doesn’t rely only on senses and perception, but also on other sources of information, like expectations. (cf. Mlodinow, 2008).

In order to venture into explanations of action the fields of alternatives are immense and the arguments diverse, with scholars disagreeing on several of its features.

As Craig Parsons (2007) suggests, the main divisional line exists between: (1) a “logic-of-position” approach to action, claiming that explanation results from constraints and incentives that surround the individual, channelling him to certain action; and (2) a “logic-of-interpretation” that tries to show that individuals act through one’s interpretation of what is possible and/or desirable to do (see Figure 3.1).

The so-called “structure-agency debate”, concerning how much people are free choosers of their course of action and how much their decisions are dictated by other forces (Giddens 1979; Dessler; 1989), is one of the most interesting examples of this tension between fields of explanation.

For Parsons’s (2007) “logic-of-position” both *structural* and *institutional* claims should be considered. “Structural claims explain what people do as a function of their position *vis-à-vis* exogenously given ‘material’ structures” (Parsons 2007: 12). As for institutional claims, the effort is to “explain what people do as a function of their position within man-made organizations and rules” (ibidem).

	General	Particular
Position	1.  Structural	2.  Institutional
Interpretation	4.  Psychological	3.  Ideational

Figure 3.1 - Matrix of explanation of action (Parsons 2007: 15)

The referred author’s “logic-of-interpretation” takes into account both *ideational* and *psychological* claims. This first states that people act “as a function of the cognitive and/or affective elements that organize their thinking” (ibidem), and the latter assumes those elements “as hard-wired features of ‘how humans think’” (ibidem).

Craig Parsons offers a more detailed approach to each of these claims, and argues that it is difficult to find an explanatory segment that would all outside of these categories:

“People arrive at certain actions due to some combination of causal forces from their structural-material surroundings, their man-made



organizational context, their social constructed ideational elements, or their physiologically hard-wired mental dispositions and motivations” (Parsons, 2007: 40).

### *Structure*

A causal segment of structural explanation of action would argue that people choose “as a direct function of what is taken to be a concrete, exogenously given environment” (Parsons 2007: 52).

A great deal of scholarship uses this claim on exogenous structures affecting individual actions, arguing that people perceive a concrete environment that surround them and they combine a certain set of preferences with that structural position and get to a decision. This process could be traced, from the agent’s point of view, as information seek, alternative setting and choice of course of action. Since the structures would influence significantly their options, then it is expectable to find similar actions from people in similar positions. This focus on external constraints implies that ideational and psychological claims should not have major effects on choice (Parsons 2007: 64).

The same line of reason can be applied to the effects of long lasting patterns of behaviour among groups of people, like organizational rules, from concrete actors to patterns of shared meanings, like traditions and social conventions. This sets an *institutional* claim on explaining human action. This approach explains action as a reaction to the actor’s position regarding man-made constraints.

The definition of *institution* is still a complex matter in social sciences, but Douglass North wide characterization might be of help: “any form of constraint that human being devise to shape human interaction”, like those “regularities in repetitive interactions... customs and rules that provide a set of incentives and disincentives for individuals” (North, 1990: 4). Powell and DiMaggio quote Young in a similar definition – “recognized practices consisting of easily identifiable roles, coupled with collections of rules or conventions governing relations among the occupants of those roles” (Young, 1986; Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 8).

It is reasonable, therefore, to *institutionalism* to share to some extent the same logic that underlies the micro-foundations of *structuralist* causality. The shape of the external context existing independently from the individual sets strong constraints that will dictate



his course of action. The major difference – as set by Parsons (2007: 71) – is on the fact that institutional constraints can be human shaped and, then, changed. Creating this possibility of variation through human intervention, although not avoiding the external constraints effects, gives a big opportunity to free and voluntary action in shaping it – agency.

The prescribed constraints by institutions – like rules and roles – set the degree of opportunities agents have to choose: even the opportunity to change those rules. However institutional change can have significant transaction costs that could inhibit it to a point of a nonadaptive structural condition. It is the agent initial position in the institutional framework that will determine how he will formulate his initial interests and preferences.

Recent research, which can easily be labelled as structuralist, claims that even our loose and complex social networks are able of constraining our actions. In *Connected, the surprising power of our social networks and how they shape our lives* (Christakis and Fowler, 2009) this is, in fact, the main argument of its authors. These social network constraints go as far as what the authors call *hyperdyadic spread*, or the tendency for effects to spread from person to person even though there are no direct links between the first and the last one. Another example is even more curious: the existence of *emergent properties*: a range of new attributes that emerge from agents interaction in networks, whose properties and functions are neither controlled nor even completely perceived by the individuals within them. These alleged characteristics of networks are used to explain, as an example, why people vote.

Jon Elster joins this ‘side of the battle’ claiming that “opportunities and desires jointly are the proximate causes of action, but at a further remove only opportunities matter since they also shape desires” (Elster, 2007: 175). For the author, opportunities largely explain *variance* in behaviour over time.

However there is also space for desire shaped opportunities (idem, 2007: 176), which can come about by intentionality or even by casual mechanisms.

### *Agency*

“It is in choosing your actions that you create [...] identity” (Korsgaard 2009: 20). The authorship of actions results from the fact of one’s choosing them. Thus, to be an

agent is to be self-conscious of causality, considering that through acting one brings about a certain end.

Craig Parsons's *ideational* explanation of action can fit under this umbrella; since it explains behaviour as "a result of people interpreting their world through certain ideational elements" (Parsons 2007: 96) like ideas, culture and beliefs. This focus on rational and sensing beings that depend on a kind of interpretive filter to organize their motivations, preferences and priorities is clearly agent centred.

Although one could claim that some institutionalists allege the same, when their explanations are built around norms (like Robert Putnam, for instance), it is important to set the difference between explanations based on (1) an objective relation between the *idea* (rules, beliefs...) and action, as the *institutionalism* does, and on (2) an interpretative one, as the *ideational* approach.

As for the *psychological* explanation of action, it claims that people act because "they interpret their world in hard-wired (and almost always irrational) ways" (Parsons 2007: 134). This approach claims that individuals take cognitive shortcuts, filter information in a biased way, are driven by emotions and, most of the time, misperceive external signs and incentives. Therefore, their preferences are set against an apparently illusional context that drives action accordingly.

Paul't Hart (2010), writing about the 'Homo psychologicus', quotes Margaret Hermann:

"people play an active role in constructing their views of politics; their experiences may lead them to challenge as well as to respect the constraints that the other potential levels of analysis impose on them. They are not merely responsive to their political environments nor are they passive receptacles easily shaped by the milieu in which they are located..." (Hermann 2002: 46-47).

This agent centred approach relies on the basic idea that we are born as centres of conscience and of activity (Marina 2009: 46). It is the human epopee to survive by his own means, as in the story of the Baron of Munchhausen who survived dying in a swamp

together with his horse by pulling his own hairs. This allegory is a good example of the agent-centred approach.

*The debate and possible integrations*

However, it is perfectly acceptable that external settings – structural conditions – can narrow down individual options to choose but, still, leaving substantial room for agency. One is not going as far as Marx's statement that structural conditions dictate behaviour "independent of the will".

The main difficulty we face when entering this debate is to question about the ability of individuals to control their own destinies in conditions of complexity. The oversimplicity of the "agency-structure" dichotomy has lead us to a "one of two" possible answers which has, certainly, reduced significantly the important wide spectre of the discussion, and entrenched the possibilities of developing a more pragmatic approach to human action – one that considers agents operating under constrained conditions, but being *agents* nevertheless. This – restricted but vibrant – *sense* of agency has been well illustrated in contemporary literature.

But, before that, let us start with one of the most extreme position: Durkheim's (1964). For this major influencing author social norms are macro *faites sociaux* that compel individuals to act accordingly to societal level constraints, thus operating under the pressure of strong expected roles. This sociological approach to the agency-structure debate has been influencing a great deal of scholarship, considering that it is mostly the social-derived norms that – being accepted by the actor – are taken for granted and come to rule his choices (Talcott Parsons 1949; George Herbert Mead, 1962). Even though when this approach is tempered with a more interpretative turn, arguing that people voluntary accept norms and that roles are not passively *taken* but actively *made*, it still leaves all the strength of the determining factors to the structure. Goffman (1959), as an example, states that the actor – although free to choose – needs to adopt 'appropriate' roles, or expected ones, as they need to be compatible with the social environment. Garfinkel (1967) follows the same path, claiming that when following norms and choosing between different options people are still accountable to the others, therefore following some level of behaviour expectancy.

Contrary to this approach, on the other extreme, we can identify the often called *homo oeconomicus* as an individual in full control of his decisions. This free and conscious exercise of choice depends on making cognisant decisions about which goals to achieve, how to get there, and making optimal use of the resources available. Although it is based on the idea of a rational actor it still encompasses some degrees of subjectivity, since calculations of utility can be influenced by others or by external incentives.

There can also be found other arguments on the complementary of the concepts of *homo oeconomicus* and *sociologicus*, arguing that the first deals also with structures, since rationality is a result of routine activities (Giddens, 1984). Similarly, the concept of agency is also relevant for the latter: Goffman's impression management (1959) is a interesting example. The merging of the two paradigms has had some results in contemporary scholarship, as the examples of Bourdieu (1984) and Giddens (1984) can prove.

Bourdieu fought what he took for an “absurd opposition of individual and society” (Bourdieu, 1990), which was represented by the extreme ‘objectivity’ of Durkheim's or Levi-Strauss's structuralism, or by the excessive ‘subjectivity’ of existentialism and symbolic interactionism. Action, for this author, is the product of a combination of individual determination and structures' constraints.

This criticism on to the structure-agency dichotomy is, nevertheless, based on Bourdieu's ‘genetic *structuralism*’. Giddens, on the other hand, gives an agent-related point of view on the disapproved antinomy.

For Giddens, Durkheim's *faites sociaux* – the pre-determined structures – that would impose behaviours upon individuals are inexistent. The social context is the result of permanent interactions and adjustments between individuals. Structures exist, but are agent-driven, and result from the ‘routines’ created by those repeated social interactions.

His ‘structuration theory’ is a “hermeneutically informed social theory... [that] recognize[s] the need for connecting an adequate account of meaningful ‘action’... with the analysis of its unanticipated conditions and unintended consequence” (Giddens 1982: 7). Giddens suggests a reflexive – feedback – coexistence of structure and agency, therefore, being both non static.

As Volker Kirchberg noted, the similarities and complementary between both models are salient:

“On the side of *homo oeconomicus*, the perception (Bourdieu) or reflection (Giddens) of the social world leads to adjusted social practices (Bourdieu) or agency (Giddens). Socially practised or agency-empowered individuals are then able and willing to shape their surroundings i.e. their social field (Bourdieu) or routines (Giddens). Here the loop shifts to the *homo sociologicus* category. [...] individuals follow the habitus (Bourdieu) – not necessarily involuntarily – while widely accepted, and thus individualized routines become structures (Giddens). [...] In a feedback loop, the individual perceives and evaluates his or her position in the field and actively improves his or her social situation.” (Kirchberg 2007: 120)

To challenge the dichotomy set by the deterministic/voluntary debate is an immense endeavour, as it defies important ‘traditions’ in social sciences. From Comte, who sought to explain how describable and objective structures influence human action to Husserl’s voluntaristic human agents. Comte’s conception of society as an *organic* whole presupposed functional relationships between its parts, which is clearly different from a more subjectivist approach that sees society as an *organism* (as, for instance, F.A. Hayek suggested). The means by which one can escape from this apparently non integrative dialectics is at the heart of the contemporary structure-agency debate (Layder 1994). Each model apparently presents a one-sided image of society, emphasizing only one of its constituents. We are still facing the question of its interaction, as Cohen remarked: “All social order rests on a combination of coercion, interest and values” (Cohen, 1968: 32).

One of the seminal approaches to this integration is the “social construction of reality” thesis (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), which can, in much of its contemporary forms, still be considered a kind of disguised structural approach. But this synthesis has had other approaches, like – as seen before – Bourdieu’s (1977) *genetic structuralism*, centred on the concepts of *habitus* and *field*. The first as the stock of knowledge one has in consequence of living in a particular social setting, and the second as the network of relationships. *Fields* condition *habitus*, which in turn provide meaning to the *field*.

Archer’s (1988) *morphogenic systems theory* is another example. This approach considers culture as a set of values and beliefs which can condition human action and

social interactions – again a cyclic process of structural constraints, social interaction and new structure elaboration. Habermas, with one of the most influential modern social theories (Ritzer 1996), also attempts to hold in balance both objective systems and subjective models. Habermas (1981) describes the complex interaction between the social system and the world of everyday actions and phenomena.

These – although partially integrative – still dualistic conceptions (Weik, 2006) have in Bourdieu and Giddens two of the most prominent contemporary authors. Both still suffer of the dualistic Cartesian heritage, or as Weik (2006) puts it “being a bit pregnant is not possible”.

As remarked by Keith Dowding:

“All approaches to the structure-agency divide note that people act, but they act as constrained and enabled by others. Their views, interests, beliefs and desires are formed through their interactions with others, and with ideas learned from people in the past” (Dowding 2008a: 30).

We argue that Political Will is a predicate of agents, using the intentional stance, and giving them ‘reasons for action’. Yet, their *reasons* – to a greater or lesser extent – might be formed through habits, ethical rules or incentives, structuring it. Nevertheless, we still need to leave room for individualized *reasons* that are not perceived as structurally determined.

#### *Agent-centred phenomenology*

A phenomenological agency-centred approach is requested: one which considers individuals as able to shape their environment, although – at the same time – being influenced by it. This bounded rationality, which regards choice of goals and means as often preferred by individuals because they are encouraged by incentives, leads us to a different anthropology: one in which people are constituted by their mutual relations, rather than merely isolated atoms or simply societal product.

Within this analysis of *being* we can find help, again, from the phenomenological school with its roots on Husserl’s work, this turn with a special focus on Heidegger’s philosophy. This author argues against the Cartesian dualism with a conception of human

being as *Dasein* (in German “to-be-there”) – the everyday human existence. This concept can be better understood as human activity that cannot be conceived separated from the world where it happens. Human action always occurs in a certain location, with particular means, with a temporal position and with objectives. And these cannot be conceived in isolation from the agent itself – from the *being*. *Dasein* – human *existence* – relies on tools, environments, and spheres of activity – structures – which form a system of shared existences (*beings*).

This focus on the temporality of *being* – one *is* within a temporal existence – impels us to look at the *end* of one’s actions and for its *ongoing*. If the problem of unintended results of one’s action has no place in this discussion on *how* we explain human action, the occurrence of unanticipated constraints should be a subject of analysis.

Therefore we consider, as Korsgaard also interestingly suggested and understandably wrote, that “for a movement to be my action, for it to be expressive of *myself* in a way that an action must be, it must result from my entire nature working as an integrated whole” (Korsgaard 2009: 19). And, as human nature is indivisible, *action* must be seen as an expression of the *self* “rather than as a product of some force that is at work *on* me or *in* me” (idem: 18).

To consider the impossibility of the separation of *agent* and *structure* is to go farther than the *feedback loop* approach that both Bourdieu and Giddens suggested. However, phenomenology – particularly Heidegger’s perspective – has been severely neglected in social sciences, mainly because of being accused of abusing on metaphysics (cf. Weik, 2006).

In opting for an explanation of leadership styles as an expression of a set of actions that result from the leader’s Political Will, we arrive at the middle ground of this debate. On the one hand we need to accept the “trivial individualism” (Little, 1991: 183) that only individuals act. Therefore, if action operates through individuals, if we want to give further understanding on how it works, we need to focus on their individual identity. On the other hand, there are several plausible arguments that can detail other mechanisms that are not reduced to individuals and involve other components. These supra-individual dynamics can be linked to particular actions.

Even when acknowledging that individuals cannot escape some structures, it is possible to make choices and, ultimately, to shape his environment. And, if one, as we do,



assumes that structures can always be understood in different ways by different individuals, as they can differ in perceptions and interpretation, those constraints will have different impacts on each individual. This concentration of repeated interactions between agents can create a set of regularities – norms and rules – of which individuals are more or less aware of. A phenomenological approach to human action must take into account that *being* results from this interaction, thus considering agent's free *intentions* as not loose free and imposed *constraints* as not absolutely restrictive.

What we are refusing are the most 'holistic' approaches that exclude connections to individual action – like Marxist and structural functionalism that seeks to identify overarching societal needs that drive groups. This would be particularly illogical since our approach is on individual leaders and our effort is to understand how their Political Will can determine their course of action and style. *Will* cannot be deprived from its most fundamental characteristic: *freedom*. At least, to some extent, there must be a particular degree of *free will*, or else all human activity would make no sense.

In order to offer a conceptualization of Political Will it must comprehend mechanisms that must consider individuals *sense* of agency and connects them to action.

### 3.5 – Conceptualizing Political Will

The genesis of Political Will is important because in order to judge how authentic and robust it is, we need to understand what has "created" it. In literature we often see it as an expression of moral principles, partisan interests, citizens' influence... Surely, part of the difficulty results from the fact that the term Political Will seems to be used as a reference – primarily if not exclusively – to the attitudes and conduct of leaders rather than as a more inclusive and complex issue. The other motive for this loose approach to the concept derives from the thorny issue that focusing on individual action has always been for political science. So here the central question may develop from asking whether the leader has Political Will to asking *how*, in the polity, such a commitment can be found. The question is thus not only whether there is Political Will or not, but above all *how* is it 'created'.

Kpundeh on a text about corruption refers to Political Will as "the demonstrated credible intent of political actors" (Kpundeh, 1998: 92). Brinkerhoff defines it as "the commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives" (Brinkerhoff,



2000: 242). This author goes further and identifies five major characteristics of Political Will, one of the few efforts in order to this systematization found in literature: (1) locus of initiative, related to where the impetus for actions resides; (2) degree of analytical rigor of context understanding, referring to the extent to which the political actor undertakes an in-depth analysis of his environment; (3) mobilization of stakeholders, dealing with the ability and willing to gather support; (4) application of credible policies to accomplish the objectives, and (5) continuity of effort.

We believe these characteristics – identified by the author in a context of anti-corruption policies – are not enough to allow a credible, complete and possible-to-operationalize definition. In fact, each of them lack precision and could be absent even though we could identify an agent with Political Will. Let us focus on each case:

- (1) Ascribing the locus of initiative to the “holder” of Political Will is redundant or even false. In fact if we are appraising to which extent a leader has Political Will, we assume that this willingness is “created in” the object of our attention. Separating *will* from the *individual* would be an ontological paradox. However, we consider that the main problem with this characteristic is the fact that the initiative could result from other agents – not from our object of attention – or even that this “impetus for action” could result from external incentives. Therefore, we should avoid considering the locus of initiative as a characteristic of Political Will;
- (2) In-depth analysis of the individual’s context could be a measure of the extent of Political Will, if that would be possible and acceptable to assume. If we could think about *higher or stronger* compared to *lower or weaker* Political Will of one individual, we might need to consider which tools did he use and how did he use them to assess these hypothetical levels of Will. We should, therefore, discard this as a characteristic, and consider it – at least – as a tool for policy;
- (3) The same critique can be applied to the mobilization of stakeholders: it might be a strategy for policy implementation, but it says nothing about the Will of the leader. One can have the necessary Political Will to – for instance – affect resources to a certain policy area, without needing any support or mobilization. Again, a tool and not a characteristic;

- (4) Regarding credible policies to attain goals, two mistakes are embedded in this characteristic: its adjectivation and a policy implementing misevaluation. First of all, considering that only “credible” policies should reveal and disclose the occurrence of Political Will is erroneous. Every intentional act of an individual on the political realm should be considered the consequence of his will, therefore every policy – even the wrong, non reliable and inconsistent one – is an act of *will*. On the second hand, it is only possible to confirm if one particular policy accomplished its objectives – even though it intended to be a “credible” one – after a considerable time over its implementation and having assured that all constraints are efficiently controlled. Therefore, engaging in a *post hoc* explanatory argument.
- (5) Finally the continuity of an effort is not a necessary attribute of Political Will. It is rather a characteristic of a policy implementation process.

A further difficulty is that Political Will – and *will* generally – cannot be detached from its content or referent (what is willed) or from the capacity to achieve it. Whatever Political Will is, it seems suspicious its occurrence can be inferred from some objective characteristics.

These fragilities urge the research on Political Will to identify a definition that encapsulates the complexity of the theme, avoiding its two main risks: a vague label or an enumeration of features that would contribute to an even more intricate – and therefore exaggerated - characterization. The wished-for definition should depict the concept in a simple and functional approach.

The relevant and most common aspect of the scarce definitions found in literature is the acknowledgment of intentionality and context dependency as the nucleus features of Political Will.

Quoting Christine Korsgaard,

“The concept of action requires both an intentional movement and a representation or conception of the world. These together are what allow the agent to guide himself through the world. It is because both of these elements are needed for the idea of action” (Korsgaard, 2009: 98).

As accurately suggested by Paul Moon, “the study of political leadership must acknowledge the interaction between the leader’s resources, such as personal skills and political opportunities, and the constraints imposed by social, economic and political systems and historical circumstances” (Moon, 1999: 81).

*Two dimensions of Political Will and conceptualization*

As explained above, Political Will is a complex phenomenon that includes individual actors, organizations and governance contexts. In addition it is only possible to measure it indirectly through evidences identified *ex post facto* from retrospective. When muddling through the complexity of the concept this leads to the troublesome methodological dilemma: the propensity to employ *post hoc* circular explanatory arguments (Brinkerhoff 2000: 241).

Our conceptual framework seeks to avoid this problem specifying the characteristics of Political Will and its constitutive dimensions. As claimed by Alfred Schütz:

“Every ordinary purposive action takes within the means-end relationship. Establishing the pattern of such an action simply means seeking out how typical ends and the typical means are related. In other words, the actor’s choice of goals, his in-order-to projects, is determined via ideal-typical construction. Once this is done – that is, once the actor’s goal is defined – it is only a matter of selecting those means for him that experience has shown to be appropriate.” (Schütz, 1972: 233)

That is to say, the agent “from the present of the action, projects his actions into the future and adapts causally the means” (Aranzadi *et al*, 2009: 27).

Two important aspects must be taken into account when considering what is constitutive of Political Will, that goes deeper in the analysis than just looking at resources and constraints. One is the idea the individual has of himself, his own identity, status, personality, motivations and desires – what psychologists call the *self*. The other is what

the individual think of his possibility to face challenges – what psychologists call *coping*. (Marina, 2009: 46).

The first focuses on the effects of people's values, commitments and drives. The latter focuses on the way the agent sees the world he is in, based on his beliefs, information gathering and processing, and prior experiences. Both these *motivational* and *cognitive* approaches are necessary to understand Political Will and its influence on leadership styles. These approaches were labelled by Koppl (1999) from the expectations perspective: *dispositional expectations*, or propensities to act and *psychological expectations* that comprise individuals' thoughts about the future.

Considering the *cognitive approach* or *psychological expectations* as one of the dimensions of Political Will, we can argue that it results from the individual's interpretation of his 'landscape' and 'conditions', and his way of 'projecting the future'. On the other hand, the *motivational approach* or *dispositional expectations* consider the agent's 'starting point' – the moment (in the present) when he projects the future.

We should detain ourselves for a moment on these dispositional expectations as they are normally misinterpreted as being the *will* – or, that is to say, often *will* is 'reduced' to these *because-motives* of the self.

The first important step is to draw a sharp distinction between *wishing* and *willing*, which was initiated by Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics and of which contemporary phenomenology (through Husserl and Heidegger) is still heir (Lotz: 2006). Aristotle's main argument is that *willing* is associated with choice and directed towards *means*, whereas *wishing* is directed towards *ends*:

“For example, we can *wish* to be healthy, but we cannot will or choose the end of health; rather we *will* the means that are necessary to attain the wished end” (Lotz 2006: 122).

Therefore, as stated by Aristotle: “we deliberate about things that are up to us and are matters of actions”. One does not *will* things beyond one's control, but only *possible* things. These *practical possibilities* are not contained in the act of wishing, as claimed by Husserl: “The mere wishing does not contain willing, it does not contain practical

modalities and it is not a practical act, that is, a willing act in the broadest sense” (quoted in Lotz 2006: 128).

*Willing* has to do with how possibility is conceived, being positing acts. And this distinction is crucial for our understanding of the whole concept of Political Will, as it allows us to disclose the meaning of *will*. For instance, a political leader might claim – genuinely – he *wants* to reduce taxes. Strictly speaking we must conclude that, if he does not do it immediately, he does not have the *will* to do it, and rather it is only an expression of *wish*: he *wishes* to reduce taxes (cf. similar example in Lotz, 2006: 129). So, “the difference between wishing and willing is closely tied to the question of how the *possibility* of an object is present in someone’s consciousness *of* that object” (Lotz 2006: 129). Husserl in *Ideas II* claims this to be closely connected to what he calls the “I can”, which constitutes those *practical intentions* connected to one’s *will*, as opposed to *mere possibilities* out of *wishing*.

Hermeneutics faces a challenge when an individual claims he *wants* something. We need to distinguish sharply between three possible sub-categories of *wanting*: wishing (‘I wish’), intent (‘I must’), and possibility (‘I can’). We claim that the last two configure the dimensions of Political Will that able us to get to a comprehensible definition of the concept.

To conceive *possibility* as one of the dimensions of *will* is not to conceive it independent of one’s being, but dependent on the interpretation one does of *external conditions* over which we have limited or no control (Lotz 2006: 131).

A schematic approach that tries to synthesize the relations between the previously discussed categories of action (from Mises’s praxeology and Schütz’s theory of action<sup>8</sup>), needs to conceive the execution of a projected act as something that results from the

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<sup>8</sup> It is relevant to stress the fact that this linking between both authors, although rather recent, has become recurrent in scholarship: Kurrild-Klitgaard, P. (2001), ‘On rationality, ideal types and economics: Alfred Schütz and the Austrian School’, in *The Review of Austrian Economics*, 14 (2/3): 119-143; Koppl, R. and D.G. Whitman (2004), ‘Rational-choice hermeneutics’ in *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 55(3): 295-317; Zanotti, G. (2007), Intersubjectivity, subjectivism, social sciences, and the Austrian School of Economics, *Journal of Markets & Morality*, 10 (1): 115-141; Aranzadi, J. *et al* (2009), The praxeology of L. von Mises and the Theory of Action of Alfred Schütz, *New Perspectives on Political Economy*, 5(1): 17-32.

voluntary intention of the individual towards an *imagined future*, generating experiences and feedback that constrain the *present* of the action (see Figure 3.2).

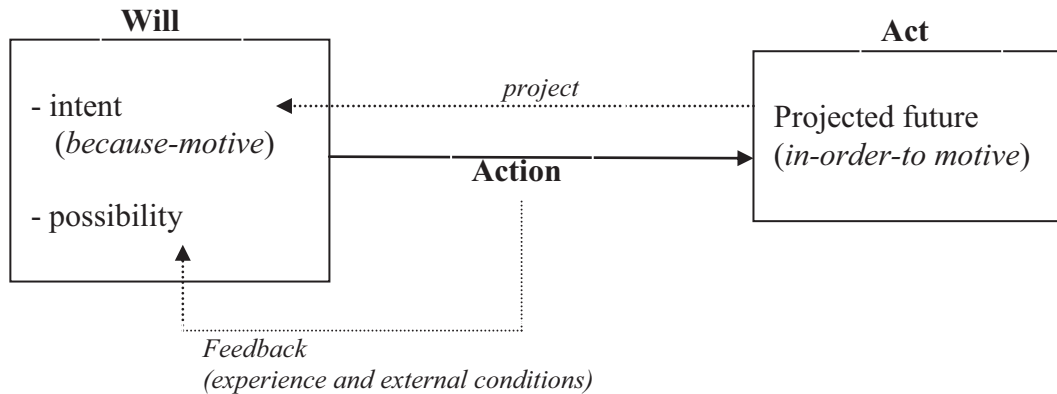


Figure 3.2 – Categories of action and Political Will

Indeed what has been missing on Political Will definitions found in literature is the distinction between the "must" and "can" dimensions. That is why it is frequently hard to try to "introduce" the role of the agent in the models, leaving almost all the explanatory potential to structures and external constraints. Thus we often get an undefined concept or exclusively based on the *feedback* offered by an entirely *logic-of-position* approach or by a straightforward *interpretivist* perspective.

Nevertheless, the "I can" dimension results from the agent's interpretation of his setting. And this depends on the agent and changes from one individual to another. As stated by António Damásio (1999: 320):

"When you and I look at an object outside ourselves, we form comparable images in our respective brains. We know this well because you and I describe the object in very similar ways, down to fine details. But that does not mean that the image we see is the copy of whatever the object outside is like. Whatever it is like, in absolute terms, we do not know" (Damásio, 1999: 320).

It is from this *representation* of the world that, from a purely interpretative way, individuals try to understand the conditions they have in order to act. Here reappears the

problem of the content of *wills* – and their effects – seeming completely contingent. In fact, our *wills* have no power to make the effects of our action be the ones we “wished for”. And yet we continue to consider ourselves as agents, having no choice but to choose, and that being the most non negotiable nature of human beings: its free will. However, in order to be an agent individuals need autonomy (having control over your *movements*) and need to be efficacious, because it is through those *movements* that they bring about the effects that they wanted to happen. As Korsgaard (2009: 213) concluded: “the *constitutive standards* of action are autonomy and efficacy”. To increase understanding of Political Will we added its *intentional dimension*, related to the moral drive, ideological setting, and preferences. This, previously labeled as “I must” dimension, sets the *constitutive principles* of action.

This concept of Political Will does not allow any separation between its two dimensions. It is unreasonable to consider Political Will just a consequence of intentionality, eagerness or commitment to act, or a mere outcome of contextual possibilities. A leader has no Political Will merely because he feels he must perform in a certain manner or for the reason that there are enough instruments to do it – willingness is not enough for a prime-minister to implement a radical policy change on constitutional issues, nor only parliamentary support would allow it. Therefore, we need to consider our definition of Political Will an unbreakable sum of two dimensions – not “can” *or* “must”, but “can” *and* “must”.

We can derive four logical propositions from this conceptualization:

**PROPOSITION 1:** IF ONE HAS THE INTENTION AND SENSES THE POSSIBILITY TO ACT, THEN ONE HAS POLITICAL WILL;

**PROPOSITION 2:** IF ONE HAS THE INTENTION BUT SENSES THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY TO ACT, THEN ONE HAS NO POLITICAL WILL;

**PROPOSITION 3:** IF ONE SENSES THERE ARE POSSIBILITIES BUT HAS NO INTENTION TO ACT, THEN ONE HAS NO POLITICAL WILL;

**PROPOSITION 4:** IF ONE HAS NEITHER THE INTENTION NOR THE POSSIBILITY TO ACT, THEN ONE HAS NO POLITICAL WILL;



Intention and possibility are constituents of Political Will, both necessary as attributes that make sense to this unitary construct. None of the dimensions is therefore sufficient by itself to explain the leader's Political Will, as expressed in the first proposition.

The second proposition derives from our understanding that “having the wish” is not enough to act in the political realm. Both internal (from the leader's perspective about his capabilities) and external (from his context) conditions are required in order to have the – at least – the expected possibility of acting.

The last two propositions are easily acceptable from a logical perspective since they represent the absurd of having Will (political) without *will* (intention). Therefore it would be impossible to accept the existence of Political Will without the necessary element of personal intention.

A descriptive image of these propositions would result as this:

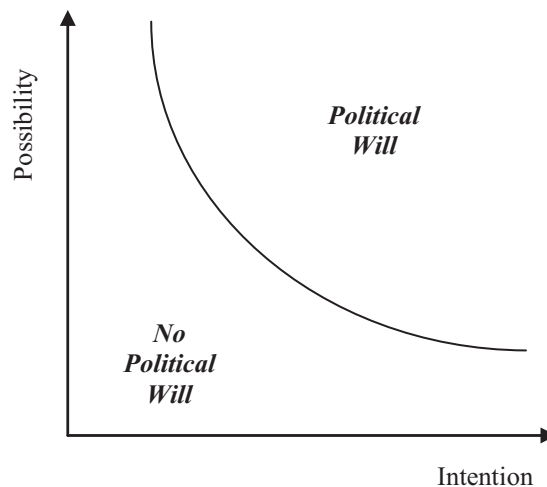


Figure 3.3 – Dimensions of Political Will

Therefore this could lead us to a new and more powerful definition of Political Will, more justifiable by literature review, valid to interpret leaders' biographies, resulting from theory and with further implications regarding its operationalisation in empirical studies of leaders in action.

The relationship between governance context perception, resources, institutional mechanisms and willingness to act is vital to implement policies on the ground. Does the availability of resources and functioning systems drive the willingness to act? Yes, but not enough. Does willingness explains Political Will? Sure, but not only it. As a result, we are stating that there are two fundamental features of Political Will: 1) *intention* determined by leaders' choices (commitment through constitutive principles, resulting from dispositional expectations), and 2) *possibility* determined by the constraints leaders sense when pursuing their preferences (ability through constitutive standards, resulting from psychological expectations).

The first feature implies a variety of possible models for the determinants of Political Will. Commitment is determined by the preferences of the leaders that can be affected by motivation, beliefs, desires, ideology, as well as interests. The second feature implies that Political Will is not directly observable, because it depends on the perceptions leaders have of their autonomy and political efficacy. Ability is determined by the constraints faced by each of these actors and their capacities to act.

In fact, we must take into account that Political leadership is a rather different field of knowledge than the classical leadership theories applied to organizational contexts like private business. The word 'politics' – regarding the wider and public sphere of action – introduces a completely new concern: the relationship with 'others', with the public. This requires from the leader permanent legitimation – if in the business world loyalty is acquired by law and rules, in the polity it derives from trust.

We were lead to this context mediated intentionality, which results from the willing to act and from having the necessary resources and power to do it. As a possible definition, we claim that *Political Will is an individual's intent to act through interpreted possibilities in order to change the public state of affairs.*

#### *Explanatory limitations*

This definition – although simple, but with powerful consequences – also lies in between the structure/agency debate. In fact, leaders' interpretation about context, constitutions and capabilities (Lowndes and Leach, 2004) gives relevance to a more institutionalist approach to leadership, while leaders' choices, interests, and preferences are clearly more in debt with an agency perspective of explaining individual's actions.

Following this line of reasoning, one has Political Will because one “must” *and* “can” do something. Therefore, Political Will, as a concept, needs the agent’s *intention* to attain a certain objective (*projected future*) and, at the same time, depends on his sense of *possibility* to achieve the intermediate goals of the purposive path.

Churchill’s example might help to illustrate the case (amongst several similar ones which are easily identifiable). Before the war he *could not* implement or produce any significant change since he was not in power, but he certainly felt he must (one just has to remember his powerful speeches about the need to support RAF budget). Afterwards, during the war he *sensed* he had the possibility and he could act accordingly (being Prime Minister), and he continued to believe he must. As a result we got Political Will and a strong leader. But of which kind?

This is where our definition asks for further enquiry, since it might fall short of relevant consequences for our research. We should explore what “can” and “must” mean.

The concept of Political Will can be applied to any context where actors in a political environment differ in their commitment and ability to attain a particular objective. We can argue that the set of actions performed by a political leader – his style – is a consequence of what the leader believes he “must” be – if he scores high on the “I can side”. It is a consequence of: “I can do something, and I *must do it this way...*” The same logic is valid the other way around: style is a consequence of “*the way I can*”, if he scores high on the ‘I must side’. Something like: “*I must implement this policy, and constitution, context and my capabilities allows me to do it this way...*”

Although this definition would fit into the structure-agency feedback perspective on explaining individual action, the ambiguity and extent of the resulting logical possibilities of action is not helpful and does not contribute to a useful and practical definition of Political Will. Based on this concept, we still find some problems, mainly when trying to justify the choice for a different course of action, that is to say different leadership styles. In fact, although we argue that political leaders have different perceptions about their *sense of possibilities*, we can’t say much more about its consequences to leadership styles.

We could simply argue that the leader’s perceptions would lead him to a dichotomous perspective of the “I can” dimension: a more *individualist approach* to his role, or a more *collective perspective* when regarding the success of policy implementation. Although this would explain it partially – a kind of leader-centred style, or one of more

dispersed power style – this does not say much about Political Will and it does not explain all the different leadership styles.

Bearing in mind our definition and conceptualization of Political Will, a difficult task is yet to be accomplished: how to operationalize it in order to gain theoretical and practical usage?

In the real world, *intent*, built on a projected future, and *possibility*, driven by the agent's *mundivisions*, must not be simple dichotomous dimensions: there is intent or there is not, and there are possibilities or not. In order to explain different procedures of action by political leaders, we need to unveil how they see the world and their action – which plural rationalities are at stake and how they interact in order to 'produce' different leadership styles. What we intend to do in the next chapter is to operationalize both dimensions of Political Will with the help of Grid-Group Cultural Theory.

Until now we were just able to explain why or why not individuals have Political Will, but we claim that this conceptualization of Political Will allows enough 'operationalization manoeuvrability' to unveil why there are different forms of leadership.

#### *Political Will matters*

Political Will is more than simple confidence about capabilities, contexts tractability and enabling constitutions; it is a different category and order of concepts. It is also more than self-belief or about being a hotspur. In fact we argue that our conceptualization enables us to have a much more subtle explanation of leadership styles in modern governance contexts. It is a distinctive factor and it encompasses a way of interpreting leaders' constitutions, contexts and capabilities, giving us the needed clues to understand why a leader may act as a "small fish in a big pond" or as a "big fish in a small pond" although subject to similar conditions.

Leaders' Political Will also matters because their 'position' allows them to change context. Transformational leaders are those that are capable of reinforcing their leadership by formatting their political weather. Leaders are focused on windows of opportunities that enable them to produce change through their action, however "leaders matter when they have the intuition and skills to take advantage of those windows while they are open" (Nye, 2008). We claim that Political Will derives from the perception of the *breeze* that

enters through these windows: if they feel it, they have it; if their *clothes* prevent it, they might become simple non-doers.

Our conceptualization of Political Will does not claim to capture all the range of arguments and possibilities available. However based on the amount of information and arguments we have before us, we can argue that it is not possible to offer a deductive framework that delivers a completely diverse result with other causes of action that escape our range of explanation. Assuming that it would be impossible to deliver a full and complete landscape of the causal mechanisms that explain Political Will and its relation with leadership styles, our best claim is that we tried to convey a conceptualization that tries to capture the range of existing research on the issues and that would allow its operationalization afterwards.

We argued that the explanatory capacity of Political Will has been highly neglected in political leadership literature. In order to overcome this limitation we created an analytic framework concept of Political Will. We believe to have offered coherence to the diversity of approaches to leadership styles and provided considerable contributions for understanding this phenomenon by analysing the concept and, particularly, by introducing *intention* as one of its dimensions. We are now able to explain not only the occurrence of Political Will – when the agent has the *intent* and the *possibility* to act – but also to understand its dimensions as simultaneous interpretations of what the leader believes he *must do* and *can do*, which will ultimately result in different leadership styles.

“The political act as an act of will” – the title Norton E. Long’s article – led us this way. We needed to unbundle these three core concepts (action, will and political) and tried to interrelate them, offering a concept of Political Will that is capable of explaining leaders’ actions: *Political Will is an individual’s intent to act through interpreted possibilities in order to change the public state of affairs.*



## CHAPTER IV – GRID-GROUP DYNAMICS: THE OPERATIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL WILL

“A theory of leadership is dependent on a theory of social organization. [it] will necessary reflect the level of sophistication we have reached in the study of organizations”  
*Philip Selznick*

### 4.1 – A theory of plural rationalities

When political science analyses leadership it tends to focus on observable events, and particularly on its measurable elements. Whilst important as it can produce powerful insights on how political leadership works, it is rather tempting to neglect its deeper – less observable – features. On account of its apparent inherent immeasurability, the relevance of Political Will has been severely underestimated.

A theory of leadership anchored on Political Will requires an analysis of human action, as well as a theory of how individuals in such situations interact with their context. This was the main theme of our previous chapter, in an effort to unveil what we mean with the idea of Political Will, and go further on the analysis and advance with one definition. We have presented a conceptualization of Political Will drawing after both perspectives – on what drives individuals to act and how they interact with the environment. Our resulting concept – deriving necessarily from an agent centred approach – draws our attention to individual’s choices and interpretations. The next logical task is to develop the necessary operationalization of its dimensions in a way that permits the plurality of actions by individuals in the *real world*. Inevitably, we need to focus on what regards *intention* ‘formation’ and *possibilities* ‘assessment’ by individuals. Thus, we seek to provide a model of leadership styles formation deriving from Political Will that allows matching with observable phenomena.

Action must be preceded by an expectation, and therefore any leader’s activity implies a prior cognitive act. This accompanying epistemic framework which takes part on behaviour formation rests on the fact that human beings are pattern-followers and adopt certain rules and principals for guidance. One deals with new situations as they arise accordingly to this framework of principals for guidance. Political Will’s “*I must*” dimension (*intention*) ought to follow the same rule.



Living in a world of uncertainty requires heuristics, tacit behaviours, and mental shortcuts as relevant aspects of *intention* to act. One does not engage in conscious action randomly, with no prior belief system. Intention does not *result* necessarily from these principles but must be *filtered* by it.

Similarly, the way individuals interpret the world is a function of how they view it, based on experiences which are measured against prior expectations. It is this feedback loop – between *intention* and *possibility* – that allows a more complex operationalization of Political Will.

However, individuals are doomed to comprehend only some facets and particularities of their environment and social setting. This ‘constraintment’ is the only way to overcome what otherwise would lead to inaction. The plurality and complexity of the social realm – if it was not for our ‘limited’ capacity to comprehend our world – would make choosing an impossible task. We claim that there are finite and limited rationalities that allow us to set a frame for our expectations and needs, and this is a useful analytic tool to better understand what lies behind *intention* formation and the evaluation of *possibilities*.

The feedback loop between agent’s intentions and his actual experiences needs our further attention, since it is worth analysing it in two ways: (1) it claims that the system of beliefs is separate from reality, and (2) it assumes that one’s expectations will influence choice on the course of action. The first assumption stems from the complexity of the social world, and argues that one’s perception is always an interpretation of it. Therefore we can argue that those underlying system of beliefs influence also one’s *ways of interpretation*, bringing us to the second point: the epistemic framework underlies a rationality of choice that leads to adopt certain conducts or courses of action. If, as we claim, leaders’ actions result from a two dimensional Political Will which comprise *intention* and *possibility*, we need to assume that both result from a system of beliefs, rules of conduct, plural rationalities which *filter* intention and *set the frame* for interpreting possibilities.

It is this plurality of rationalities that allows us to understand the existence of diverse – even conflicting – conducts of different individuals facing the same context, and claim that each one of them is still rational, as it is consistent with each people’s internal pre-existing epistemic framework.

Therefore, choice itself is inherently subjective since it is a product of the chooser's epistemic framework, which can be as plural as all interpretations can be. As Shackle claims, "your list of choosable things has to be constructed or composed by yourself before you can choose" (Ebeling, 1983).

Action is, therefore, formed by the way in which the individual's internal method of choice is projected onto his interpretation of the environment. In order to understand which possible *ways of intention* and *of possibility* lay in front of the individual we need an analytical tool that comprises these plural rationalities.

We need to incorporate the basic lesson of subjectivist analysis that results from our phenomenological approach to human action: that the intended ends of one's actions are subjectively defined. Rather than abandon and refute the *homo oeconomicus* perspective, the alternative is to maintain our approach through the use of constructs such as ideal-types. These extract particularities that make a class of events unique, and build a hypothetical construct following a deductive method. However, the classical Weberian ideal-types (Weber, 1949, 1968) lacked what Lachmann (1970:18) considered the epistemic content of particular concern when addressing human action: *plans*. Arguing – as we have been doing – that individuals act carrying an image of what they intend to achieve (Lachmann, 1970:18), is to consider ideal-types as strategies (Schütz, 1972), and therefore not leading to an interpretation of the social world as the setting where people are bounded and structurally determined by a belief system. In its place – although assuming that it is inherently human to be responsive to incentives – we are claiming a set of limited but plural available *strategies* for human action. Again, we are not dealing with personality groups, as a traditional approach to ideal-types would suppose, but with a deductive construct that sets an analytic tool to illuminate available strategies.

Alfred Schütz basic assumption would be that every individual is constantly confronted with what he called "problematic possibilities" (Schütz, 1972) – a choice between a set of alternatives (a) arranged in systems of relative relevance with a particular weight in terms of preferences, that are (b) mutually exclusive, (c) in competition with each other, and (d) leading to renounce to the other alternatives. Schütz elaborated this arguing that "the outcome of all these choosing processes has to be anticipated as if all the choices were made rationally" (idem: 86) and as if individuals "had oriented their life-plan and, therefore, all their activities to the chief end of realizing the greatest utility with the

minimum costs” (idem: 87). These choices are made amongst mutually exclusive alternatives on the basis of preferences, which are scarce and constrained.

Grid-group method developed by the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1978, 1982), which has subsequently become known as Cultural Theory, offers an opportunity to identify four logical strategies that derive from individual *expectations about the possibility and ability* to manage situations. These strategies – as we will claim – allow us to set which style of leadership is the individual expected to perform. On the other hand, if one focus on the rules of the game (North, 1990) as the main constraining dimension of social life, it can be hard to separate the cause and effect of context and individual belief. Therefore, we will also use the same analytical tool to identify four rationalities that explain how the individual sees the world, and especially how does he *intend to interact* with it.

Grid-group theory offers a framework of reasoning shortcuts individuals use in order to overcome the complexity of the context they are in, constituting “substitute low-cost cues for the detailed information that they lack” (Lupia 2002, 55). The answer, according to a significant body of research, is the reliance on *heuristics*. As Sniderman *et al* (1991, 19) explain, heuristics “are judgmental shortcuts, efficient ways to organize and simplify political choices, efficient in the double sense of requiring relatively little information to execute, yet yielding dependable answers even to complex problems of choice”. These ‘ways of seeing the world’ (Douglas, 1982) constitute alternative rationalities which – as we expect to – can explain different styles of leadership.

We will be shifting the emphasis of Grid-group Theory from alternative cultural biases towards possible strategies that derive from plural rationalities. Actually, we acknowledge these two main standpoints, particularly vivid in the debate that confronts the agent-centred perspective (e.g. Wildavsky, 1987) with the institutional approach (e.g. 6, 2003), where analysis evolves from individual solidarities to social systems. However there are some pragmatic reasons for taking on Wildavsky’s distinctive characterization of Grid-group dimensions as a consequence of individual awareness: an answer to “who am I and what shall I do?” (Wildavsky, 1987:6). In fact, as we already cleared out, in order to provide depth to our knowledge of political leadership one needs to recognize its distinctive features and their consequences, recommending an agent-centred approach. Our main argument for the use of Grid-group Theory is that we understand individual Political

Will as neither isolated from, nor wholly determined by, social environment, and as being stemmed from a belief system inherently tied to one's expectations and experiences – and Mary Douglas work provides the tools to explore this perspective.

We will suggest the operationalization of both dimensions of Political Will using the same analytical tool, originating a complex set of property spaces and possible resulting strategies that intend to explain leadership styles. This will be addressed on the end of this chapter.

Despite the expected complexity of the proposed framework of leadership styles, its success will be due in large part to its capacity to allow understanding on how individuals in leading positions adopt particular features of action that shape their conduct. “Each rationality will generate its own distinctive engineering aesthetic: its own definition of the good, the beautiful and the socially desirable,” wrote Schwarz and Thompson (1990). “Our concern, therefore, should not be with which one is right (for that would be to insist that just one rationality had access to ‘the truth’) but rather with which is appropriate to the task at hand”.

## **4.2 – Grid-group theory**

Grid-Group is a typology of social environments created by the anthropologist Mary Douglas, and has been adapted and applied since its origins becoming a subject of its own<sup>1</sup>.

The basic premise of Grid-Group Theory is that competing moral systems, worldviews and systems of beliefs can be understood as a result of only two dimensions. It argues that it is possible to systematize group or organizational cultures as an answer to two basic social dimensions: its degree of hierarquization and of social cohesion. First developed in social anthropology – despite the fact that this system is essentially deductive – has since been applied throughout the social sciences. Mary Douglas states that the intention was to produce “a crude typology [...] to account for the distribution of values within a population” (Douglas, *u.d.*), in order to “show the connection between different kinds of social organization and the values that uphold them” (ibidem). Wildavsky (1994) argues that it helps to explain how people derive their answers to basic questions like: how

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the seminal and most determinant contributions include Douglas 1978, Douglas and Wildavsky 1983 and Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky 1990.

does my context work? How do I hold people accountable to me? Answers to these questions produce basic orientations towards the two dimensions: external prescriptions and rules (Grid) and the strength of affiliation with others (Group). It explains how preferences are formed as consequence of different grid and group positions.

It has been argued Grid-group Theory's importance to better understand institutions (Wildavsky, 1987), new institutionalism (Grendstad and Selle, 1995), citizenship (Denters and Geurts, 1999), political ideology (Coughlin and Lockhart, 1998), political change (Lockhart, 1999), and policy analysis (Hoppe, 1999). Regarding our research main theme it is also relevant that Ellis and Wildavsky (1989) used grid-group theory to discuss the 'Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership'; Gerry Stoker (2000) did the same when studying British local governance and Hood (1998) applied it to public administration.

Aaron Wildavsky (1989) developed also a Cultural Theory of Leadership, but approached this theme using Grid-group Theory as a regime descriptor claiming that particular contexts are more capable of explaining certain styles of leadership. Our approach is rather different, since we intend to use this theory to comprehend how leaders understand their context and how they build their framework of intentions. Wildavsky (1987: 5) argues that preferences "constitute the very internal essence, the quintessence of politics" and Grid-group Theory allows us to understand preference formation.

Aaron Wildavsky was responsible for major contributions to the history and development of Grid-group Theory<sup>2</sup> – thereafter, and mainly due to this author's work, often called Cultural Theory. From an apparently intuitive theory by Mary Douglas, it evolved to a better integrated idea of organizational cultural bias. Together with Michael Thompson and Richard Ellis ('Cultural Theory', 1990), Wildavsky rendered a theory that comprised important features about the exercise of power and its applicability to the realm of politics, assuming that the four types of cultural bias are normally present in any group. Their major contribution was the introduction of the idea of competition between these distinct cosmologies. Rather than a static and deterministic framework, Grid-group Cultural Theory provided important explanatory value for the generation of different 'world views', conflict, power use, leadership and organisation. It was, thereby, changed into a dynamic theoretical system and analytical tool.

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<sup>2</sup> As recognized by Mary Douglas (Douglas, *u.d.*)

Wildavsky sought for an answer to what he perceived as an imperfection in the then-dominant models of human behaviour. As the author reminds us, this difficulty is stated by R.T. Michael and G.S. Becker (1976):

“For economists to rest a large part of their theory of choice on differences in tastes is disturbing since they admittedly have no useful theory of the formation of tastes, nor can they rely on a well developed theory of tastes from any other discipline in the social sciences, since none exists. [...] The weakness in the received theory of choice, then, is the extent to which it relies on differences in tastes to “explain” behaviour when it can neither explain how tastes are formed nor predict their effects” (in Burt, 1982: 347-48).

Those theories attribute it to “interests”, but do not specify “how people figure out what their interests are” (Wildavsky, 1987: 4). “The least interesting behaviour, instrumental actions, may be explained by preferences”, wrote Wildavsky, “but about the most interesting [matter], preferences themselves, nothing at all can be said” (idem: 4-5). “Cultural theory, by contrast, is based on the premise that preferences are endogenous [...] so that they emerge from social interaction in defending or opposing different ways of life”. By identifying the ‘ways of life’ that lie behind the development of interests, “cultural theory [can] explain and predict recurrent regularities” in political behaviour that several theories take as given (ibidem).

Although this claim might contradict, for instance, the notion of rational behaviour, as Mitleton-Kelly states, “It is not rejecting the theory of rational choice but is providing a theory of rationality-conferring contexts” (Mitleton-Kelly, 2004: 313). In fact, as Brendon Swedlow claims in his introduction to *Cultural Analysis* (published in 2006), a collection of Aaron Wildavsky published research: “a monistic conception of cause as self-interest is replaced by a pluralistic conception of culture allowing for a variety of motives for action” (Wildavsky, 2006: xvi). Consequently, rather than an antagonistic perspective, Grid-group Cultural Theory is seen as highly complementary to rational choice approaches, allowing them significant advances.

This *heuristic* model considers that individuals assume action strategies consistent with the ‘ways of life’ associated with the Grid-group framework. “Though we can



imagine an infinite number of potential cultures, only a few conjunctions of shared values and their corresponding social relations are viable” (Wildavsky, 1987: 6). As written elsewhere:

“It is true that human beings create meaning. But it is also true that is possible to make statements of regularities that help in explaining and even predicting (or retrodicting) the human construction of meaning. Subjectivity need not rule out regularity as long as different sorts of people feel subjective in similar ways with regard to similar objects” (Thompson *et al*, 1990: xiii-xiv).

These shortcuts influence their political action, according to Wildavsky’s *heuristics*, mediated by various cognitive and social mechanisms. Individuals’ understanding of “who they are and are not, to what groups they do and do not belong” (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 8) guides them through social interactions.

This analytical framework provides a useful tool to understand how individuals position themselves in relation to their environment. Denters and Geurts (1999) explain that Grid-group Theory “pretends to bridge the gap between individual preferences and the social structure”. It can illuminate many of the fundamental analytic questions of Political Will, as it captures much of the variety in individual attitudes and perspectives about how life is circumscribed by conventions and rules – *Grid* – and the extent to which individual choice is constrained by group belonging – *Group* (Hood, 1998).

#### *Grid and Group Dimensions*

Grid-group Theory is grounded on the idea that ways of seeing the world and ways of positioning and acting towards it are inextricable and linked. Accordingly, the individual is an adherent of one of a restrict number of *ways of life*, each characterized by mutually exclusive sets of shared beliefs and values about nature and human motivations. This assumption leads to consider individuals as inclined to define reality in such a way that the strategy they employ to deal with it is consistent with their *world view* (Douglas, 1982).

Grid-group Theory is constructed around two dimensions, where the Grid refers to the constraints created by ordered structures, and Group shows the role of group pressure



upon the individual. Hence, in the first case the greater degree to which the individual follows imposed rules, the higher he is on the Grid axis. On the other hand, the more one feels bound by collective decision, the higher one is on the Group dimension.

Group measures the extent to which behaviour is influenced by the membership of a certain group, and how much of individual choice is made in order to privilege the interests of the collective rather than his own. High Group situations relate to those when individuals are conscious of what they do as a consequence of their membership of a particular social unit. Low Group situations are those in which the individual adheres to collective units by choice and negotiation. A concise definition of the Group dimension was presented elsewhere: it "... represents the extent to which people are driven by or restricted in thought and action by their commitment to a social unit larger than the individual" (Altman and Baruch 1998:771). In the typology, Group is the horizontal axis (Figure 4.1).

As stated by Mary Douglas:

"The group itself is defined in terms of the claims it makes over its constituent members, the boundary it draws around them, the rights it confers on them to use its name and other protections, and the levies and constraints it applies" (Douglas, 1978: 8).

Every group varies in boundary strength and control acceptance. This is supplied by the second dimension: Grid. This measures the extent to which individual's roles in social relations are constrained by some kind of differentiation, and his options limited by rules and norms. A High Grid situation corresponds to those where one considers his behaviour as being constrained by imposed rules and where one's capacity to overcome the complexity of the real world is particularly limited. A simple exemplification of this attitude is presented by one of Oscar Lewis's characters in his famous book 'The children of Sanchez': "To me one's destiny is controlled by a mysterious hand that moves all things.[...] We plan and plan and some little thing happens to wash it all away" (Lewis, 1961: 171). Low Grid situation is the one where the role is not pre-set, and action is less constrained by imposed definitions or expectations. The belief in the 'American dream' of the 'self-made-man' is a good cultural example of this attitude. As a possible definition of

Grid, Thompson *et al* (1990: 5) argued that it comprises “the degree to which an individual’s life is circumscribed by externally imposed prescriptions”. Hence, “the more binding and extensive the scope of the prescriptions, the less of life is open to individual negotiation” (*ibidem*). Or, as Mary Douglas initially argued:

“The term grid suggests the cross-hatch of rules to which individuals are subject in course of their interaction. As a dimension, it shows a progressive change in the mode of control. At the strong end, there are visible rules about space and time related to social roles; at the other end, near zero, the formal classifications fade, and finally vanish. At the strong end of the grid [...] an explicit set of institutionalized classifications keep them apart and regulate their interactions, restricting their options” (Douglas, 1978: 8).

This dimension is represented as the vertical axis of the typology (Figure 4.1).

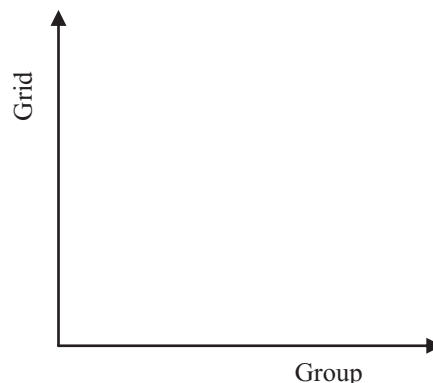


Figure 4.1 – Grid-group axis

The concepts here presented are opposites in the sense that they cannot coexist – and this is an extremely important feature of Grid-group Theory, since it is grounded on the assumption of the existence of few types possibilities, each one needing the others to define itself against. For instance it would be a social impossibility to consider a group with a high degree of internal solidarity coexisting with strong personal liability of any member within it. The greater the group cohesion, the weaker the individual

accountability. This approach rejects the notion of collective responsibility as it is ultimately dependent solely on individual action, and not on group intervention. The conflict here suggested between group cohesion and individual responsibility is a reflection of the real world tension between an individual who favours collective action based on solidarity and the individual who works based on personal liability.

Similar examples can be given to unveil the conflict between sensing High Grid and Low Grid constraints: the stronger the responsiveness to external directives and propensity to follow rules, the weaker the willing to act free from imposed norms. This approach suggests, for instance, the conflict between bureaucracy and entrepreneurship, as each reflect different world visions and diverse personal inner drives. All epistemic frameworks are possible, but competing between themselves.

#### *Four cultures*

It is the blend of both dimensions that provides the framework upon which a comparative analysis can be created, based on the generated four logically distinct *cultures*<sup>3,4</sup> (Figure 4.2):

- (1) High Grid / High Group: the *Hierarchist*, who favours clear patterns of action and a commitment to the group that creates them;
- (2) High Grid / Low Group: the *Fatalist*, highly responsive to external directives in isolation from any group identity;
- (3) Low Grid / Low Group: the *Individualist*, demonstrating negative attitudes towards restrictions on freedom of choice, and low levels of communal involvement;
- (4) Low Grid / High Group: the *Egalitarian*, combining a belief in low levels of social hierarchy with a high degree of group belonging.

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<sup>3</sup> A latter developed fifth culture – autonomy, or the individual who deliberate withdraws from organised forms, usually labelled as *hermit* – is consciously out of our analysis as (for purposes of leadership assessment) it is intrinsically inconsistent with any type of social interaction (an indispensable feature of leadership).

<sup>4</sup> The four label descriptions draw after Anthony J. Evans (2007) paper on Cultural Theory.

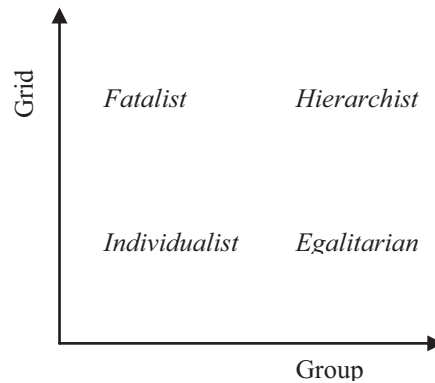


Figure 4.2 – Grid-group cultural types

The *individualist* favours competition and autonomy, and rejects coercion, since boundaries and practices are negotiable. Success results from individual capacity to tackle with the endless array of raw material provided by the context, and when it does not succeed the only to blame is the individual and not some external system. Weak both in group boundaries and regulation, individualism finds competition as the main form of control.

The *egalitarian* conciliates collective choice and individual autonomy by ordering and institutionalizing equality. It avoids large bureaucracies, centralization and decision making driven by experts (Wildavsky, 2006: xvii). The lack of inner group differentiation leads to the absence of a control role exercised by the occupancy of a particular position, asking for those who can plausibly claim to speak in the name of all the members. This strongly bounded group tends to be egalitarian not only as a way of repudiating inequalities amongst its members, but mostly as a strategy to avoid external aggression. As this ‘enclave community’ – as often Mary Douglas labelled it – frequently avoids ranking and ordered rules, it becomes harder to organize. Such a group would be apparently menaced by leadership and authority (Douglas, 1986).

The *fatalist* freedom of movements is limited by rules and is excluded from community life, since resources, events, relationships are uncontrollable and uncertain. The individual is not to blame if things go wrong, nor the ‘system’, but rather fate and pure chance. Actually it is possible to assume that *fatalists* can result from excluded and non adapted individuals to each of the other three ‘ways of life’: non-conformed to group

belonging *hierarchists*; non-enthusiastic *egalitarians*; and unable to tackle with competition *individualists*. “They are free because they are alone” (Douglas, *u.d.*).

The *hierarchist* is as restricted by rules and regulation as the *fatalist*, but they are not excluded from the decision making process. Imposed rules to individuals bounded within clear social units are a way of encouraging harmony between them and predictability. Process is therefore an important characteristic of social relations, which is a different approach from the *fatalist*, to whom process is over constraining. In a society in which roles are ascribed and behaviours are ruled by positional norms, hierarchy is the valid cultural ‘way of life’ that sees programming as the best way to solve coordination problems (Douglas, *u.d.*). The commitment to authority exercised through rules and organization is a key feature, as it is believed to favour community strength and removes the possibility of internal dissensus. The *hierarchist* accepts the existence of appropriate expert elites to conduct things and manage resources. Leaders in *hierarchic* ‘ways of life’ prefer apathic followers – only when it does not translate into dissatisfaction with the system; likewise, participation is relevant as long as it confines itself to predetermined rules and it does not conflict with the existing system.

Michael Thompson integrated Grid-group typology with the ‘Myths of Nature’ typology – based on research on institutions managing ecosystems (Holling, 1986) – which was developed as an answer to the need to identify “the minimal representations of reality that will have to be ascribed to each managing institution” (Thompson, 2008: 43). Each of which could be expressed as a ball in a landscape (Figure 4.3).

The shape of the landscape reveals the expected interaction between ball and landscape – between individual (life) and world (reality). This integration resulted as an approach between both typologies, since each represented its part of reality.

When nature is *perverse / tolerant* it is robust until a certain point – at least inside a safety zone – but if it goes too far things can go wrong. This myth corresponds to the *hierarchist* viewpoint, to whom regulation is needed to avoid dangerous situations. Nature *capricious* is represented by a flat line – a random world in which individuals have to cope with erratic situations, a lottery, not knowing what to expect and having difficulty to learn from experience. A myth compatible with the *fatalist*. When nature is *benign* it accepts trial and error, experimentation and risk taking, because its robustness – represented by a hill shaped in a way that allows the ball always to return to the same position – permits

equilibrium. As the *individualist* would agree. If nature is *ephemeral* – the small ball must be as quiet as possible, because any movement could lead to fall – its fragility needs great care and bounding. A myth compatible with the *egalitarian* approach.

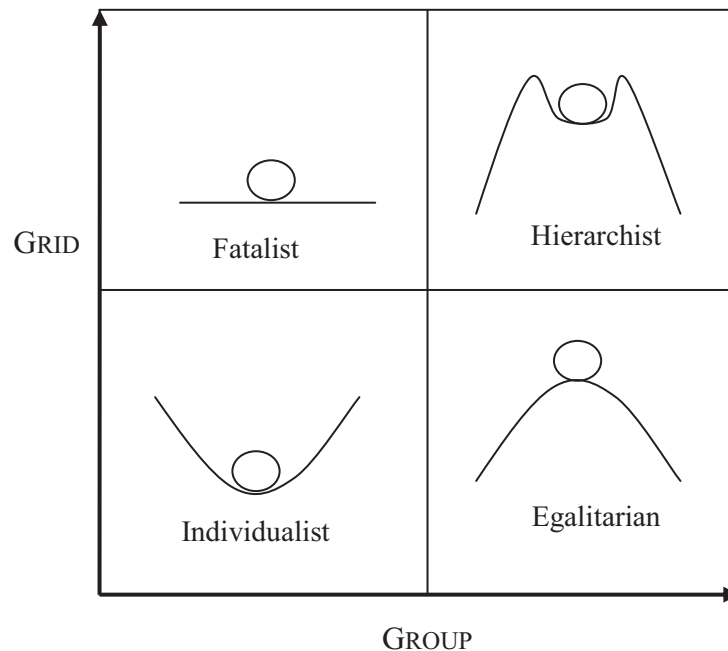


Figure 4.3 – Myths of nature

These myths thus map onto the same typology of heuristics presented by the Grid-group Theory. The *hierarchist's perverse/tolerant nature* “requires us to ensure that exuberant behaviour never goes too far, that the ball remains in the zone of equilibrium”, and “certainty and predictability [...] become the dominant moral concern” (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 27). The *fatalist's capricious nature* determines that it is “luck, not learning, that from time to time brings resources our way” (idem: 28). The *individualist's robust nature* encourages trial and error, being confident on the hidden hand that will lead things to its best outcome. The unintended risks of this behaviour are what the *egalitarian's ephemeral nature* expects to originate. In order to prevent this from happening one needs to hold the collective together – “this is the perfect justification for those who would have us living in those small, tight knit, decentralized communities that respect nature’s fragility and make appropriately modest demands upon it” (idem: 27).

Jon Elster uses a similar approach when presenting four cognitive attitudes to the world: *certainty*, *ignorance*, *risk*, and *uncertainty* (Elster, 2007: 125-126). In the first case one can perceive what the *hierarchist* is looking for. In the mode of *ignorance* outcomes and their possibilities of occurring are unknown, as the *fatalist* would agree. *Risk* and *uncertainty* would correspond to the low grid attitudes of the *individualist* (who allows himself a certain degree of exposure to world's numerous possibilities) and the *egalitarian* (who prefers to hold on to his own group security).

The major risk of a typology with four-types is to be convinced that all other typologies might fit under the same approach. Re-interpretation and forced integrations would lead to the weakening of each typology. It is only useful when it allows specifying the content of the types in particular settings, upgrading its analytical capacity and reinforcing its eventual explanatory potential. We believe this is what Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky successfully did with the 'myths of nature' in Cultural Theory (1990). This integration has been mentioned in research dealing with context perceptions (Thompson, 1997; Grendstad and Selle, 1995; Davy, 1997). Mary Douglas adapted them with slight label changing, applying them to human nature (Douglas, 1996; Douglas and Ney, 1998): nature *robust within limits*; nature *unpredictable*; nature *robust*; and nature *fragile*.

We used 'hierarchist', 'fatalist', 'individualist' and 'egalitarian' as the preferred labels. And this option is particularly relevant since labels transmit different connotations, and different interpretations of the theory, implicitly emphasising one analytical level rather than the other. When referring to patterns of social relations we find terms like hierarchies, isolates, networks and clans. Terms as collectivism, fatalism, individualism and egalitarianism point at patterns of beliefs. Finally, our labels point at individuals holding different views and choosing certain strategies.

These plural rationalities represent four ways of organising, but are condemned to the requisite of variety condition – that each 'world vision' needs the other in order to have something to organise itself against. Grid-group Theory holds that all four cultures or 'ways of life' coexist and continually contest for hegemony.

Leadership action, of course, can be analysed along these lines, not as a consequence of one eventual dominant culture of the social context, but as a result of individual Political Will, which, as we claimed, must result from an inner drive to act



based on a *preferred* ‘way of life’ (must) and from the *possibilities* to act resulting from the way one sees how the world is ‘organized’ (can). Both dimensions can be assessed through the grid-group typology; that is to say that one *must* act in a hierarchic, egalitarian, individualist, or fatalist way; and one *can* act in one of the same four different ways. Leadership style – the way of acting, the chosen strategy – is, therefore, the result of the ‘overlapping’ of these two – confirming or contesting – dimensions.

Given that there are two axes being used, there are only four possible stable positions to be taken. A different system could probably come up with more additional axes creating more ‘choices’. But the claim of Grid-group Theory is that it is enough to account for all possible positions observed – is parsimonious. An important claim is to consider its ‘leverage’ – it explains a lot from a little<sup>5</sup>, or as Wildavsky argued, it allows researchers to “get miles of preferences out of an inch of facts” (Wildavsky, 1987: 8) in order to explain change as well as continuity. Also because of these consequences, the theory provides several opportunities for falsification.

Even though we might support the concept of *free will*, this does not mean one could just decide to start play the violin. Although free to make up a new music style, if one wants to be understood, play with others, and eventually be appreciated – if one wants to relate to someone else – a similar code must be shared: known to those involved on communication. There are millions of possibilities, but only few allow common understanding. Acting through these categories just mean (as the Greek etymology points it) making reality ‘falling’ into closed entities. In a similar way, while most sociological typologies allow for two options Grid-group Theory claims there are only four stable ways of doing this.

Suggesting individuals hold distorted views of reality – not necessarily *wrong*, just *partial* – this Theory enables us to understand the contours of the process of choosing which strategies to act, based on *intentionality* and *possibility*.

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<sup>5</sup> As Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba argue: “Good social science seeks to increase the significance of what is explained relative to the information used in the explanation. If we can accurately explain what at first appears to be a complicated effect with a single causal variable or a few variables, the *leverage* we have over a problem is very high. Conversely, if we can explain many effects on the bases of one or a few variables we also have high leverage” (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994: 29)

### 4.3 – Leadership styles: the four *standard* property spaces

Grid-Group typology changed into “Cultural Theory” following Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky (1990) contributions. This expansion showed how each of the four types have fundamentally different attitudes towards leadership, as there are elements of all biases in all collectives, corresponding to different myths of what the state of nature is really, interacting between themselves, creating change and setting different individual epistemic approaches to their own actions.

Regarding political leadership we follow Wildavsky’s claim that some of the core concepts and concerns in political science are the object of Grid-group Theory – its specification of social relations “are simultaneously specifications of different ways of making decisions, constituting authority, and exercising power” (Wildavsky, 2006: xix). Would leadership styles be as vast as a subject that it cannot be encompassed?

The fundamental difficulty in this discussion is to overcome those arguments that are premised upon the erroneous assumption that leadership styles are infinite, easily changeable and malleable. Although an analytic strategy treating leadership style as an independent variable can be accepted, one must consider the extent of constraints that are at stake. Even our agent-centred approach to leadership recognizes a limited degree of freedom regarding the choice of which action (style) to adopt. Based on pure intention or in an evaluation of possibilities, the leader finds himself facing several – but finite – ways of acting.

The general inattention to the relationship between leadership styles and Political Will becomes particularly serious when one looks at traditional approaches to the issue – no text on political leadership would be complete without a reference to Weber’s three types of authority: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic. As Peter Blau claimed, Weber focused especially on how authority types were institutionalized, rather than analysing its sources (Blau, 1963: 309). Richard J. Ellis on an effort to explain the occurrence of charismatic leadership in organizations states, “taking its cue from Weber, subsequent scholarship has filled volumes on the routinization of charisma, while leaving relatively unexplored the conditions that give rise to charismatic leaders” (Ellis, 1991: 310). Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky go farther when claiming that Grid-group Cultural Theory is more consistent and coherent as its resulting typology relies on the same dimensions, while Weber’s is formed from completely different

dimensions: “tradition is a historical criterion, legal-rational refers to a mode of rationality, and charisma refers to the qualities of the leader” (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 104).

It is this symmetry that gives comparative strength to the grid-group typology. It offers us an analytical tool that allows understanding of the sources of leadership. Grid-group Theory and the resulting four types of individual action may be used to characterize both general cultures as well as individual orientations, and may constitute a coherent ‘orientation system’ – a heuristics – that “may in fact exhaust all possible systems of political orientations” (Eckstein, 1997: 31). We claim that individuals' choices are influenced by their bounded rationality, which provides the direction of their systematic attention bias. Individuals opt between risks to fear because this selection reinforces and confirms their way of life (Douglas & Wildavsky 1982).

The way of presenting the possible outcomes as viable leadership styles resulting from the analytical framework resonates with the ‘property spaces’ approach to typology construction advocated by Paul Lazarsfeld. Lazarsfeld (1937) considered a configurational approach to the problem of reducing social phenomena complexity, from multidimensional possibilities to a limited number of types. Alfred Schütz also discusses the construction of typologies, developing – and contesting – Weber’s approach (Schütz, 1972). According to him, ideal-types translate the meaning-contexts of *life-world* actors, suggesting that it presents ideal-typical descriptions of the behaviour of agents. These, as Lazarsfeld (1937) claimed, “involve sets of attributes that make sense together as a unitary construct” (Ragin, 2000: 77). This approach considers the attributes of a type as its ‘property space’.

The resulting four ‘property spaces’ of Grid-group Theory present the attributes of four unitary leadership styles, combining different perspectives on the degree to which individual’s life is determined by external imposed prescriptions (grid) and on the extent to which an individual is incorporated into bounded units (group).

As Anthony J. Evans (2007) claims, the underlying culture will determine how individual approach to the *real world* is set and how they understand their own action: egalitarians look at behavioural responses and favour equity; hierarchists see action as a resources issue and favour order; individualists take mixed approaches and favour freedom; and fatalists are apathetic and favour survival.

First it is important to stress that the four labels used reflect an ‘approach to action style’ rather than a pre-existent construct of a leadership style. For instance, a *hierarchist*

refers to the way the agent sees his world and how he should behave. This could encompass several styles of leadership (from the autocratic to the facilitator). It would be rather limitative and constraining to consider all the styles presented by several authors in previous research. We considered it would be better to present this typology as a reference to each type general characteristics and using the same labels used in Grid-group Theory (see Figure 4.4). Each leadership style – if presented as the variety in literature suggests – is adapted by each of its authors to the specific context or social environment they are working on, which would create confusion and misunderstanding in our typology. However, the opposite logic is also possible and desirable: to present all the existing labels of leadership styles as explained or part of the hereafter presented types.

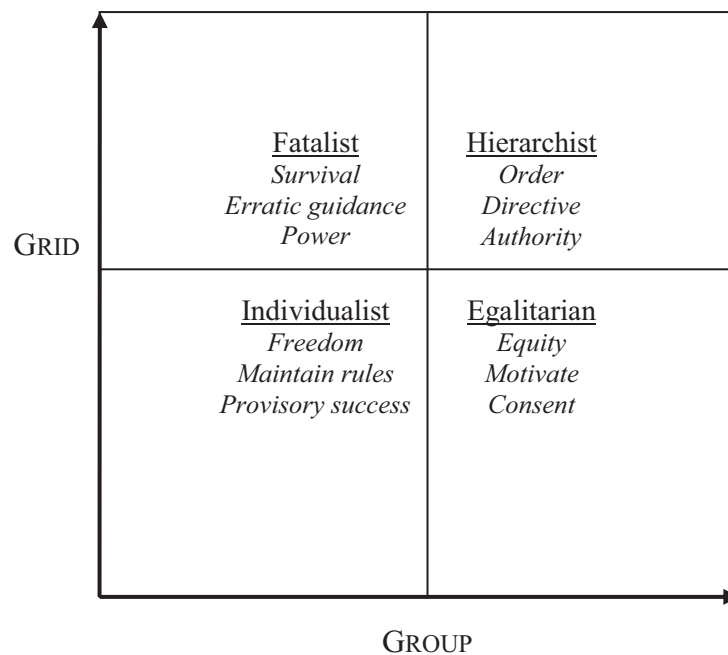


Figure 4.4 – Characterization of grid-group leadership styles and extreme possibilities

In the grid-group framework “it is the form of power [...] that differs” (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 6). Leadership styles as a consequence of the typology here presented reveal how individuals in leading positions ‘build’ their strategy of action based on different premises. If all four rationalities are possible and justifiable then their upholders must have different convictions as to how people and the world are. As Michael Thompson reminds, Cultural Theorists like to use the story of Reverend Sidney Smith who allegedly said,

when he saw two women shouting at each other, “They are arguing from different premises” (Thompson, 2008: 21). Grid-group Theory allows us to grip these contradictory certainties that lead individuals to follow different patterns of action, offering a map of property spaces concerning these different premises of *worldvisions* or, as Husserl would put it, challenging perspectives on *lifeworlds*.

### *The hierarchist*

Within the *hierarchist* culture the world is seen as tractable so long as the correct structures of control are in place, with institutionalized status differences (Thompson, 2008: 22). These individuals believe that when facing threaten “the collectivity comes first and the individual is secondary [... stressing] the transcendence of the individual by organizational interests” (Hood, 1998: 73). But unlike egalitarians, they believe orderly rules and authority structures are the best response to avoid chaos.

The leader expects rules to maintain order and considers planning, coordination, foresight and the clear assignment of authority as the best solution for social stability. Leadership in *hierarchical* ‘worlds’ is “necessary and should be supported” (Ellis and Wildavsky, 1989: 2), and assigning responsibilities to professionals and experts is one of the possible strategies (Thompson, 2008: 25). The leader, when conscious of internal conflicts and risks that could undermine the stability of this regime, seeks for more approval and, therefore, asks for more control and command.

This leader is expected to be directive, to have a top-down approach to problems, and to exercise authority. His style of leadership can be appraised from a more withdrawal perspective (when closer to the fatalistic culture) “I will do what I’m expected to do, considering my position”, to a more active role of “They will do want what I want, because they will obey”. The extreme style possible is of an autocratic form of leadership (Wildavsky, 1989).

Hierarchies in every social arrangement tend to be pro-leadership cultures since it ties authority to position. Such condition allows the holder of that position the opportunity to control information, secure himself from attack, protect his power structure, and keep each part of it under control. Others are seen as unbalanced and in need for the adequate management.

*The fatalist*

Although seen as one the most important ‘findings’ by Grid-group theorists (Hood, 1998: 145), few give detailed attention to it, focusing almost exclusively on the three other ‘active’ categories. In fact, at first sight fatalism seems to be incompatible with any style of leadership, as it is usually presented as an ‘anti-organizational’ attitude or as configuring ‘non-actors’ (Thompson, 2008). However, as Christopher Hood strongly claims, “you do not have to work for very long in or around [public-service] organizations to come across the widespread [...] belief that public organization and policy is inescapably unpredictable and chaotic” (Hood, 1998: 146). And the author reinforces this perspective stressing the fact that such attitudes and beliefs “are sometimes to be found even – perhaps especially – among those at the very top of major public institutions” (ibidem).

Within the *fatalist* worldview power is seen as a far and most of the times unreachable issue. Despite this approach, the leader has some degree of freedom, although expecting unmanageable complexity and only success by chance. We can identify several styles of leadership: from a compliant “It does not matter what I do” to a more active “If I guarantee security, I will rule”. There is a “value added” when someone is capable of bringing security and some “new horizons” to their system.

It is because the leader is conscious of the fact that he relies on non fatalistic worldviews to keep things going, that he is expected to give guidance erratically. Followers expect successful change to be unlikely and random in its causes. The extreme possibility is of a despotic style of leadership (Wildavsky, 1989).

*The individualist*

An *individualist*’s strategy demands answers to problems through freedom of choices, based on transactional arrangements (Thompson, 2008: 22). People are seen as inherently self-seeking and atomistic, and therefore the leader expects spontaneity of free interaction between agents to produce benign change.

The leader is conscious of the possibility of creating inequality and exclusion, however this does not set a problem to him – as it would do in an egalitarian perspective – since it is through one’s particular personal capabilities that an individual can ‘make a difference’ in an individualist culture. The leader is expected to maintain the rules of the

game working, allowing individual initiative and competition to thrive, letting them have the opportunities to put in practice the “I will do what I want” idea. Their power – their difference – arises frequently from the “value added” they can bring into the system: expertise and effectiveness. Leadership in this case is – as any other commodity – necessary only when needed, therefore limited in time and in authority. As explained by Wildavsky, they “are expected to step down as soon as their task, e.g. winning a war, is completed” (Ellis and Wildavsky, 1989:1). The extreme possibility is of a meteoric style of leadership – “the right person in the right place at the right time for the right purpose” (Wildavsky, 1989).

*Individualists* see hierarchists and egalitarians as self-serving, hiding interests behind a collective discourse, while fatalists are simply excusing their unpreparedness.

#### *The egalitarian*

In an *egalitarian* worldview problems arise from the excess of what others see as necessary: too much hierarchy and too much inequality. Bonding and group cohesion are necessary to handle an *ephemeral* nature of the world, where danger is everywhere, and the only way to ‘survive’ is to keep the members of a group together. The leader expects the community to hold together and from the collectivity the necessary strength to manage the instability of the context; benign change is driven bottom up through the collective action of those who share similar values. But he is conscious of his group’s inner paradox: shared values and bonding are advantageous while they are exclusive, bounded and protected from others.

Accordingly, the egalitarian solution involves people to challenge authority and self-interest, setting one important dilemma for a leader in such contexts: authority – which would naturally arrive with the exercise of leadership – is seen as threatening. Being expected to manage the accomplishment of a common task, to promote group-building, symbolize group interests and motivate agents towards the group, asks for voluntary consent, and therefore a style of leadership ranging from a ‘going with the flow’ – “I will do what the group wants” to a more active – “I will lead the group to consider me as a good interpreter of their *wills*”. As Ellis and Wildavsky puts it: “Aspiring leaders must therefore dissemble, looking and sounding at once persuasive about the right course to follow and self-effacing, as if they were not leading at all” (Ellis and Wildavsky, 1989:2).



The extreme style of leadership possible to consider is of a charismatic leader. In this case, although the exercise of leadership would probably be seen as a form of inequality, charisma is a powerful tool to climb the ladder of authority in order to provide guidance to the group. For an *individualist*, hierarchists are seen as overbearing and individualists as selfish.

A way of representing social relations in each ‘way of life’ could be as follow: *hierarchists* in a tree, with a strong and formal control structure with assigned roles in order to maintain the *status quo*; *fatalists* randomly scattered, with weak links between them and with some adhoc roles; *individualists* networked, with each role assessed based on expertise criteria; *egalitarians* in a circle around shared values which they want to preserve and protect.

Interpreting the role of ‘risk’ in each of the four rationalities was one of the main concerns of Mary Douglas. For the *hierarchist*, risk is acceptable if inside previously established rules controlled by leader; for the *fatalist* it is irrelevant, since failure is inevitable; for the *individualist*, risk is “his job”, as it is necessary for success; and, for the *egalitarian*, it should be avoided – one must be protected from – and its source is outside the group, typically from other rationalities.

Exercising leadership in hierarchies is easier than doing it as an egalitarian leader (Wildavsky, 1989). In fact, an authority that inheres in one’s position opens the opportunities to consider the exercise of power more legitimate than to do it in an egalitarian context. In this case – as leadership implies the existence of followers – the consequent inequality is only acceptable on persuasive basis: as a way of conveying efforts to protect the group and push it forward.

It would seem plausible to have – in most cases – leaders as *hierarchists*, which from our Political Will approach would mean having the *intention* to behave hierarchically, believing in regulation, discipline, rules and retrainings; and *seeing the world* as prone to accept the same kind of actions. However it is not possible to accept that all leaders are *hierarchists* and all consider this the best and only way to approach their role. In fact, reality and history reveal several examples of the diversity of leadership styles that would not fit under the same label as *hierarchists*.

#### 4.4 – The “surprises”: leaders’ actual and expected “worlds”

As Wildavsky states: “the dimensions of cultural theory are based on answers to two questions: Who am I? and What shall I do?” (Wildavsky, 1987: 6). Our conceptualization of Political Will asked for a twofold answer to both questions, arguing that *action* (shall do) results from *intention* (must do) and *possibility* (can do). Therefore both dimensions of Political Will should be operationalized through a reinterpretation of Grid-group Theory and identifying *intention* as a consequence of an individual projection of his expected role in the real world and *possibility* also as *heuristic* driven. For both, Grid-group theory offers a powerful typology.

Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky offered a similar approach when they stated:

“Presidents and citizens exist within a political culture (or ways of life) that guide and constrain how they behave. Presidents, we argue, face constraints of two kinds: conflicts within the culture (or cultures) to which they adhere, and conflicts between opposing cultures. Such conflicts [...] create dilemmas” (Ellis and Wildavsky, 1989: viii).

A standard complaint against cultural theories is that it cannot explain – or accept – change. However, events and behaviours considered anomalous from one particular perspective and which are better explained from another, can be catalysts of change for individuals. In fact, the competition between the ‘ways of life’ is permanent, and adherents may change from one to another, due to – what Thompson *et al* (1990: 69-81) called – the *theory of surprise*. These different rationalities are resistant to change and those events which do not fit the expectations or the explanations raised by a certain ‘way of life’ are explained away. However successive anomalies or surprises can have a cumulative impact on the individual’s *heuristics* and can, ultimately, provoke change.

One of the seminal approaches to changes in leadership styles is due the Aaron Wildavsky (1985). It is a rather extensive passage; however its relevance to our theme requires its reference:

“An important source of internal cultural change is the unappreciated leader. Men in market regimes who experience the exhilaration and frustration of leadership may not be willing to relinquish command.

Frustrated at disobedience, they may seek to assert control, converting their followers to fatalists. Exhilarated, they may seek to mantle charisma, founding their own equities. [Charisma] cannot occur in hierarchies because they institutionalize leadership. [...] So, too, fearing or despising their followers, hierarchical leaders may seek to subjugate them or, conversely, being rejected by them, seek support on the basis of superior personal qualities by leading a charismatic revival” (Wildavsky, 1985: 99).

Michael Thompson addressed this issue on article titled “Good Science for Public Policy” arguing that one should study ‘surprises’, exploring the relationship between *actual worlds* and *socially stipulated worlds*:

“If you are acting in the world in the conviction that it is one of those four ways, and it happens to be that way, then expectation and outcome will be pretty close. But if the world is one of the other ways then the chances are that, sooner or later, you will be surprised” (Thompson, 1993: 677)

The resulting *typology of surprises* (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 71) is 4x4 matrix of actual and stipulated words. Four out of the twelve *surprises* are, actually, simple confirmations of what one expected the world to be. Considering Michael Thompson’s argument on *actual* and *stipulated worlds* one can straightforwardly conceive the same approach regarding our conceptualization of Political Will. In fact, the dimension of *possibility* coincides with the cognition of the *actual* world (the recognition – through interpretation – of its characteristics), while *intention* reveals similar features as to what constitutes a *stipulated world* (a reality one imagines will face when engaging in an action towards a projected goal).

These *surprises* set one of the strongest arguments for developing and adapting a theory of plural rationalities – as Grid-Group: it reverses a common state of affairs in which a good theory is the one that provides one good answer to a problem. Grid-group Theory provides several answers to different problems.

Subsequently we will concentrate on looking at the identification of paradoxes and surprises, arguing that these apparent contradictions are capable of being resolved or understood by individuals. In their grid-group frame, surprises differ from one quadrant to

another. Even a stable environment will not produce consensus, according to the Cultural Theory impossibility theorem (Thompson *et al*, 1990), which claims that worldviews will always be opposed and plural. For this reason twelve types of surprises and several associated kinds of changes can be identified. These adjustments, supported by developments in the interpretation of the environment, and associated with eventual paradoxal worldviews, are what prompt changes in expected behaviour – and subsequently – adjustments in leadership styles, among the four primary ‘ways of life’. Even those four rationalities are themselves possible because of their inherent uncertainty about context, allowing different beliefs to be held (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 10).

Actual world Stipulated world	Hierarchy (Perverse/ Tolerant)	Fatalism (Capricious)	Individualism (Benign)	Egalitarianism (Ephemeral)
Hierarchy (Perverse/Tolerant)		<i>Unpredictability</i>	<i>Competition</i>	<i>Total collapse</i>
Fatalism (Capricious)	<i>Unexpected runs of good and bad luck</i>		<i>Unexpected runs of good luck</i>	<i>Expected windfalls don't happen</i>
Individualism (Benign)	<i>Partial collapse</i>	<i>Skill is not rewarded</i>		<i>Total collapse</i>
Egalitarianism (Ephemeral)	<i>Others prosper</i>	<i>Caution does not work</i>	<i>Others prosper</i>	

Table 4.1 – Typology of surprises (from Thompson *et al*, 1990:71)

In Table 4.1 stipulated worlds meet actual worlds, or – as in our framework of Political Will – *intention* (because-motives) faces *possibility* (the interpreted context and possible means of producing the expected results). This *typology of surprises* tries to unveil which unexpected reactions would inherently mean the existence of a particular discrepancy between the disposition to act, based on the assumption of a particular world

nature, and the cognition of the environment. Individuals hit by these *surprises* become conscious of being acting in a way that corresponded to a world that was, in fact, different from their expectations. Along the diagonal – from top left to bottom right – no conflicts are identified and the absence of surprises mean a confirmation of expectations about the nature of the world (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 72).

For instance, if an individual is an egalitarian, believing in the myth of Nature ephemeral, he expects to be *playing* in negative-sum games and expects competing ways of life to fail or – even worse – to drag him down if he does not protect himself. Surprise results from the observation of the success of others – outside one's worldview and group – meaning their nature is not as hostile and dangerous as expected.

Another example is given by the *hierarchist* who realizes he cannot obtain the necessary information about the regularities and norms that regulate his world in order to act rationally. Unpredictability is the surprise this *hierarchist* would face when encountering a capricious (fatalistic) reality. On the other hand, being an *individualist* one is not surprised when others fail or even when one fails. However, Nature benign does not cope with the recognition of a context where skill is not rewarded, or when facing partial or – worse – total collapse of one's worldview. An *individualistic* leader, acting in a world where social relations and power are regulated by initiative, skills, individual entrepreneurship and risk, would be astonished by realizing systemic failure; for instance, a collapse of the market (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 73). The same *surprise* would produce no effect on a *fatalistic* leader – to whom collapse is possible, and skills are not rewarded. Not knowing anything about the context, and being unable to improve chances of success, *surprise* would arrive from the opposite observation – predictability and acknowledging the possibility to repeatedly produce good results.

The absence of *surprises* would probably mean an overlaying of actual and expected 'world views'. However this could also correspond to cognition misinterpretation. As *surprises* give the learning inputs necessary to survive and adapt, being unable to recognize these conflicts would just mean total inadequacy and would lead to definite failure.

Ahead we present several hypotheses regarding how an individual confronted with these conflicts would react, causing plausible migrations between rationalities demanding, therefore, the necessary grid-group dynamics analysis. We also develop a typology

enhancement in order to illustrate which consequences these conflicts or confirmations between *intention* and *possibility* ('must' and 'can') would produce regarding leadership styles. Different 'configurations' of Political Will will – certainly – lead to different ways of acting, therefore setting variant and more complex styles of exercising leadership.

#### 4.5 – Types migration: grid-group dynamics

Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky present twelve kinds of change resulting from their typology of surprises (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 75). Arguing that all classic dichotomized typologies offer few – often one – possibilities of migration, they state that: “the direction of change differs from those that have been given by the masters of social thought because we have three possible destinations for every displacement, whereas they offer only one” (ibidem). This limitation is exemplified, for instance, by the Weberian dichotomy between markets and bureaucracies, allowing only one of two states for an individual to be in.

Besides the possibility of a confirmation of 'ways of life', when the expected world coincides with the actual one (occurring when *intention* and *possibility* are driven by the same heuristics or, eventually, the feedback loop is so 'intense' that one constraints the other), it is completely possible to accept the occurrence of *surprises*. These would push the individual towards eventual migrations between styles – among the four quadrants of the grid-group framework. However these authors do not suggest which possible migrations can happen. It is not necessarily true that, for instance, a *hierarchist* worldview conflict resulting from the surprise of total collapse of their organized and rational-legal organization would lead him to act as a 'converted' *egalitarian*. In fact, we must assume all the other possibilities as resulting from this conflict.

The same example is useful to illustrate what we call *type migration* or, later, *strategies*. This hypothetical *hierarchic* leader – to whom the best way to act and lead would be through pre-established rules in a well organized social structure – expected the world to be there as a result of a *Perverse / Tolerant* nature. This 'way of life' would determine his *intention* to act and lead him to behave accordingly. However, as we have claimed before, the leader's action is a result of a two dimensional Political Will, and we also need to consider the way he 'understands' how the world works (the *possibilities* available).

Our hypothesis suggested that a conflict would arise from a discrepancy between the *nature of the world* that influenced his disposition to act (*intention*, resulting from a ‘stipulated world’, in Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky’s words), and the *nature of the world* that he sensed from his context (*possibility* resulting from an ‘actual world’, in the referred authors own words). We consider that the leader’s Political Will results from this combination of dimensions. Therefore, in this particular case, the *hierarchist* – surprised by a collapse of his institutional rules – might consider adopting a more *egalitarian* style of leadership. But this is only one of the options available. He could, instead, assume that particular style for a limited amount of time, and decide to return to a style coherent with his own – eventually more comfortable – original *intention* (for instance, when the moral dimension of “I must” is strong). On the other hand, a slight or a total change of style is also theoretically possible – led by provisory acceptance of other rationalities or by complete disturbance. This is the example of a political leader to whom governing is still a top-down issue, expecting to produce change through the traditional administrative branch of government, and realizes that people are asking for more engagement in decisions, contesting a top-down approach and claiming for a more horizontal network of policy implementation. In this case he could adapt his style to a more syncretic approach or, if unable to reconcile disparate beliefs, ‘hide’ himself in a different and eventually contradictory style of leadership.

Another example results from an *individualistic* leader to whom the fact of non achieving success by capacity building, skills and risk, and realizing that others succeed in organizations with hierarchically imposed rules, might lead him to change his approach to action, developing a more bureaucratic style of leadership. This would be the case of a political leader to whom his role would be confined to act amongst other political players and expect that a window of opportunity would open to succeed, and, suddenly, faces a group of followers expecting directions and guidance from above.

We claim that these non confirmations lead to five possible strategies regarding the leader’s action plan: *Change*, when a leader’s perception of ‘real world’ possibilities impels him to act accordingly to this ‘way of life’; *Retreat*, when a provisory and transitional style of action, lead by *possibility*, occurs temporarily but culminates in a return to an original position closer to his *intentional* rationality; *Influence*, a change in the expected style deriving from *intention* which results from an adaptation to the constraints



which he considers to be present by a surprising ‘way of life’; *Support* which occurs as a reaction to surprise when the leader reinforces his primary approach; and *Escape*, when the discrepancy between expected world and ‘reality’ is too uncomfortable for the leader and leads him to abort any possible and plausible ways of action that would result from *intention* or *possibility*. This sets what we call CRISE strategies (*Change, Retreat, Influence, Support, and Escape*), which occur as a consequence of plural rationality surprises.

Accordingly we considered three possible ‘positions’ of the leader on the grid-group framework: the *original position* (“one must act a particular way resulting from one’s own approach to context” – graphically represented by a white circle); a *provisory / transitional position* (impelled by what one “can” do or by what others expect one to do – the grey circle); and a *resulting position* (as a consequence of what one “must” and “can” do – the black circle). Next, we present schematic representations of these migration strategies as well as a more detailed explanation of each<sup>6</sup>.

First, a Change Migration Strategy (Figure 4.5) stands for what we have previously suggested to happen when an individual realizing a *surprise* resulting from conflicting ‘ways of life’ opts to act accordingly to the *possibilities* he acknowledges as more effective. As claimed in Cultural Theory, “setting up four social contexts individuals can live in [...] gives us twelve types of *change* [our italics]” (Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky, 1990: 75).

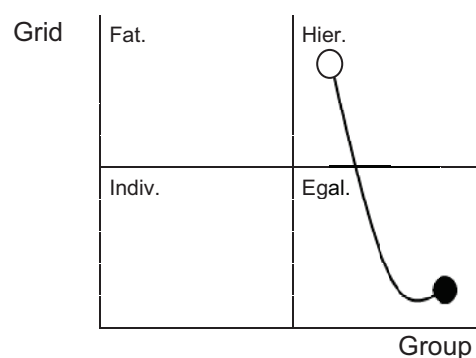


Figure 4.5 – Change Migration Strategy

<sup>6</sup> All schematic examples are built under one hypothetical conflict of ‘ways of life’ resulting from a *hierarchical* ‘original position’ (the *intention* dimension of Political Will, the disposition to act), and an *egalitarian* ‘actual world’ (the *possibility* dimension of Political Will, the cognitive path to action). All other conflicts are theoretically possible but unnecessary to present.

As all the other migration strategies, although theoretically possible to draw, some of them may constitute social impossible types, or impossible transitions in real life. However, we will follow and present all possibilities given by our deductive approach grounded on Grid-group Theory and expect further empirical work to filter, refute or, eventually, confirm them.

Regarding change strategies we follow the same arguments used by Michael Thompson *et al* (1990), claiming that each change occurs in different ways, produces different effects, and represents different alternatives. As an example, a *hierarchist* changing to an *egalitarian* style of leadership is asked to perform an adjustment on particular features of his approach to action, which would be completely different if he changed to an *individualistic* style. We will explore each later.

A Retreat Migration Strategy (Figure 4.6) represents the leader's possibility to perform a temporary change in his style of action driven by his perception of *possibilities* – presenting what we called a *provisory / transitional* position – but, afterwards, returning to his *original position*. As Marina (2009: 196) claims, this migration from one worldview to another is a *Zugunruhe* – a migratory discomfort in German: the willingness to return to more 'friendly territory'. Once again we assume this possibility resulting from a stronger sense of inner preferences or moral driven action. In this case, Political Will is more dependent on its *intentional* dimension.

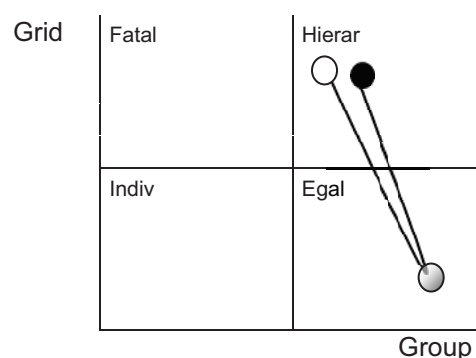


Figure 4.6 – Retreat Migration Strategy

As the schema presented above intends to claim, we must assume that a *hierarchic* style of leadership must not be driven only by a confirmation of 'world views'. It might

also be a consequence of a refusal to accept a style change, although momentary change can occur.

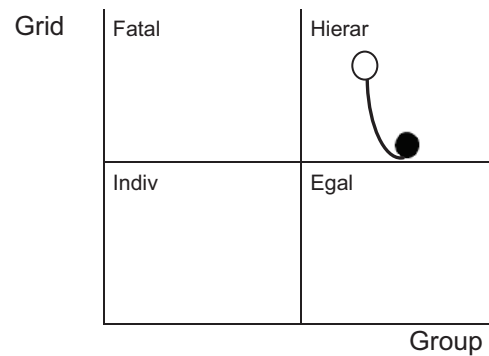


Figure 4.7 – Influence Migration Strategy

An Influence Migration Strategy (Figure 4.7) sets a theoretically plausible hypothesis of a leader being persuaded to adapt his style of leadership after an assessment of the context constraints that surround him, and the available *possibilities* to act. For instance, a leader from a neighbourhood association, head of a strong local social movement, in case of applying for office and winning an election, might be obliged to consider all the new opportunities given by a more hierarchic approach and – without abandoning his ‘safe world’ – act in a more *non egalitarian* way. When expectations face reality, one might be driven to adapt to it.

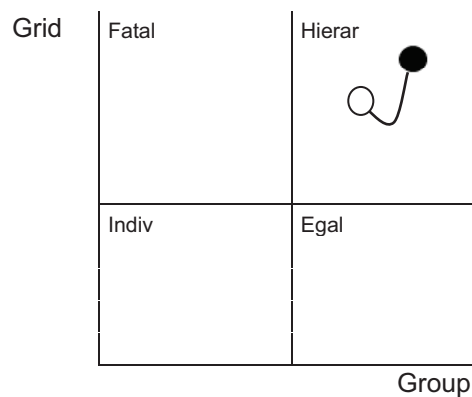


Figure 4.8 – Support Migration Strategy

A Support Migration Strategy (Figure 4.8), that one would be led to consider plausible to happen when there is no conflict between *intention* and *possibility*, actually we argue it is driven by a rationality discrepancy. This reinforcement is more reasonable to happen as a personal response to a *surprise* between supposed and actual worlds. In case of confirmation the leader would keep his expected style.

In these cases, as Widavsky suggests, from the *hierarchy* quadrant one can expect an ‘autocratic’ leader; from *fatalism* a ‘despotic’ one; from *individualism* a ‘meteoric’ one; and from *egalitarianism* a ‘charismatic’ one (Wildavsky, 1989). Again, we need to stress the fact that it is not only by *wanting* that an individual becomes a certain kind of leader. For instance, it would be practically impossible for an individual without the needed personal attributes to become a charismatic leader. In a case like this – an *egalitarian* facing a world vision conflict – it would be highly impossible for him to follow a Support Migration Strategy, since he would assess his own possibilities as inexistent. Other strategies would, therefore, be considered.

In a Support Migration Strategy – following an opposite example – a *hierarchic* leader facing *egalitarian* demands from his followers can consider the possibility to react strongly against it and hold on to his dispositional path to action, in fact, reinforcing it and responding in a more extreme position (higher grid and higher group). This would lead to a *totalitarian* leader.

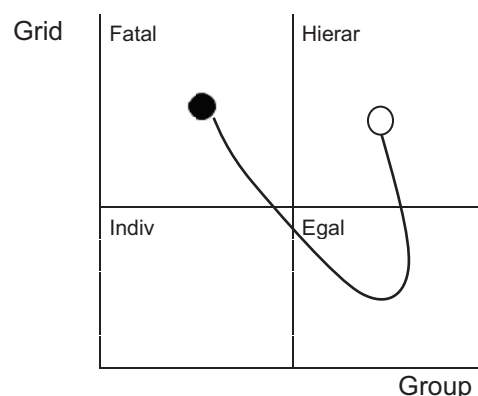


Figure 4.9 – Escape Migration Strategy

Finally, an Escape Migration Strategy (Figure 4.9) stands for the also available possibility to be a ‘victim’ of a rationality conflict. This cognitive dissonance<sup>7</sup> could lead – in extreme cases which we must acknowledge and for the sake of a theoretically wide and consistent leadership model – to a drastic change in the style of leadership. This strategy poses extreme difficulties for research, since it opens the possibility for similar consequences as those of contingency – unforeseen and unexpected results in leadership styles can occur. This would mean that every style of leadership might have resulted of all the four ‘original positions’ of the Grid-group framework.

This criticism, although pertinent, must be considered under some important limitations since this strategy is less probable to happen, particularly if we consider the ‘diagonal escapes’ (e.g. from *hierarchist* to *individualist*; or *egalitarian* to *fatalist*). We admitted these possibilities under the Change Migration Strategy, since it meant giving some preponderance to the cognitive path to action driven by *possibility* interpretation by the agent. However, in this case one is facing the eventuality of changing for a non-existing possibility – it is neither an original position nor an ‘actual world’.

This limitation rejects the allegedly contingency of the model since for this strategy to occur one needs to understand which mechanisms were present and, particularly, one needs to understand the leader’s personal trajectory.

Even though less likely to happen we theoretically consent to this possibility since extreme cases of rationality dissonance could have significant impacts on individuals and their behaviours.

Contrary to the classic dichotomized typologies which offered few possibilities of type migration, Grid-group Theory offers a multiplicity of options. We use it as a *heuristic* tool to operationalize both dimensions of Political Will. As a consequence, particularly due to the different strategies associated with eventual conflicts between ‘ways of life’ related to *intention* formation and *possibilities* assessment, we gain several rationales for understanding each different leadership style occurrence. Eventually, we can also consider what the consequences would be when we have prior knowledge of the leaders Political Will.

Using existing literature and applying Grid-group Theory framework it is possible to deductively present all the new property spaces resulting from this typology.

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<sup>7</sup> “According to cognitive dissonance theory, there is a tendency for individuals to seek consistency among their cognitions (i.e., beliefs, opinions)”, in Festinger, L. & Carlsmith, J.M. (1959).

#### 4.6 – Political will and leadership styles: new property spaces

Our definition of Political Will as *an individual's intent to act through interpreted possibilities in order to change the public state of affairs* unveils both cognitive and dispositional paths to action, which interact under what we have regarded as the *possibility* and the *intention* dimensions of the concept.

Following the same argument it would be incoherent to consider a one-dimensional approach to leadership styles, as we regard them as resulting aggregate actions of an individual in a principal position. Therefore a simple grid-group analysis is insufficient and unsatisfactory to explain our object of investigation. As a consequence we argue that both dimensions of Political Will must be operationalized using the same heuristics that results from grid-group typology. Actually we follow Thompson's *et al* (1990) claim that although "human perception is everywhere culturally biased, [that] does not mean that people can make the world come out any way they wish" (1990: 3). Therefore, a conflict between expectations and reality is possible, or – as we have put it before – *must* and *can* approach to action can have different answers from the same individual. The *dispositional* path – triggered by moral drive, ideological setting, and preferences – and the *cognitive* one – which comprise individuals' thoughts about the future and their interpretation of the 'landscape' and 'conditions' to achieve it – need to be separately considered and examined.

Previously we presented several possibilities for what we have called type migration, or Migration Strategies. These result from the fact of Political Will being a consequence of between-dimensions surprises. More than simple confirmations of *dispositional* and *cognitive* paths, Political Will and – subsequently – leadership styles can result from a conflict between its two dimensions.

All the possible strategies were taken into account and will be presented as its resulting different styles of leadership, delivering complexity but also – as we expect – offering understanding about leadership.

The resulting new property spaces comprise both the confirmations (the four cases when *intention* and *possibility* 'follow' the same rationality heuristics) and the several different resulting styles from heuristic conflicts. In a simple descriptive approach, when analysing Political Will one must consider five kinds of "I must" rationalities and, again, five possibilities to complete the sentence "I can...":

(M1) I must, from a *hierarchical* perspective;  
(M2) I must, and I have an isolated and *fatalistic* perspective of life;  
(M3) I must, through an *individualistic* and market oriented approach;  
(M4) I must, with an *egalitarian* approach with strong group boundaries;  
and (M5) I must not.

(C1) I can, acting *hierarchically*;  
(C2) I can, through a *fatalist* world;  
(C3) I can, as an *individual* amongst others;  
(C4) I can, as a member of a tight group of *equals*;  
and (C5) I cannot.

As we claimed in the last chapter, when (M5) “I must not” and / or (C5) “I cannot” are given as answers, it is implausible to consider the existence of Political Will, and therefore, as an evident consequence, one should reject these possibilities as determinants of leadership styles. Besides explaining why sometimes we do not expect to find Political Will, this definition and its operationalization allows us to understand different leadership styles, which result, not only from leader’s inner convictions, commitments or preferences, but also from his perceptions on the ability to achieve the desired goals.

Our proposed Migration Strategies allow us to consider several property spaces, besides the four ones resulting from *rationality confirmation*, which might contribute to explain extra leadership styles, eventually even some which are only deductive possibilities and might be later considered social impossibilities or empirically inexistent. The criterion of social possibilities will be followed as it is relevant in order to allow property spaces reduction. As Alexander George and Andrew Bennett argue, “a good theory may be able [...] to specify hypothetical cases or combinations of variables that should not exist or should at least be highly unlikely” (George and Bennett, 2005: 249).

#### *Confirmation (or Non-Migration Strategy)*

Rationality confirmation (Table 4.2) results from the cases where political leaders’ stipulated worlds are cognitively corroborated by their perceptions about their possibilities to act and their ability to perform their expected role. Therefore, from a Political Will



definition, *intention* and *possibilities* are driven by similar heuristics, giving analogous answers on how the world and its nature work.

Possibility Intention	Hierarchy (Perverse/ Tolerant)	Fatalism (Capricious)	Individualism (Benign)	Egalitarianism (Ephemeral)
Hierarchy (Perverse/Tolerant)	<i>Hierarchist</i>			
Fatalism (Capricious)		<i>Fatalist</i>		
Individualism (Benign)			<i>Individualist</i>	
Egalitarianism (Ephemeral)				<i>Egalitarian</i>

Table 4.2 – Political Will and styles of leadership resulting from ‘nature confirmation’

Nature confirmation will, therefore, ‘produce’ styles of leadership closer to a purist definition of each of the cultural quadrants of the Grid-group theory: the *hierarchist* style; the *fatalist*; the *individualist*; and the *egalitarian*.

Several of the known styles of leadership (cataloguing and labelling has been a prolific activity under leadership studies) fit under these more extensive tags.

#### *Change Migration Strategy*

The first migration – Change Strategy – considers those events where leaders’ Political Will is determined by his interpretation of the context, therefore guided by *possibilities*, regardless of his *dispositional* path to action (*intention*). However the latter must not be out of the equation, as it establishes his *original position* and, therefore, allows us to understand ‘where is he changing from’ – a *fatalist* by change departing from

a egalitarian perspective should have a different style of leadership from one whose *intention* was formed by a *benevolent* perspective of nature (an *individualist*).

Thompson *et al* (1990) suggest different paths descriptions for all of these twelve change strategies, arguing that “some of them may be socially impossible, [...] a sensible first step is to run through all twelve and see whether we can spin recognizable stories around each of them” (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 76). That is what we did:

- (1) From *hierarchist* to *fatalist* is the consequence of being deprived of a special position, losing authority and ranking. This can occur by others’ interference and decision, but from the leader’s perspective this can also take place by perceiving the world as unpredictable and being led to accept nature as capricious. A political leader in office, even with strong constitutional powers, can choose to act in a *fatalistic* style conceiving his special role as ineffective. No matter what he does, it will be impossible to get the expected results.
- (2) From *hierarchist* to *individualist* is ruler becoming a free agent, occurring when a political leader steps out of his formal headship and realizes that competition amongst institutions might deliver better results. Public administration modernizing strategies led by influential politicians in order to reduce bureaucracy, such as the New Public Management ‘school’, is an example of this change.
- (3) From *hierarchist* to *egalitarian* is the case of whistleblowers (Evans, 2008). A leader getting down of his formal position and, with a strong sense of group solidarity, accepts the rejection of imposed rules. This can lead to what Evans (2008) defined as “the unauthorized revelation of wrongdoing”, or a political leader that ‘joins his followers’ arguing against his previous way of hierarchically impose rules. He is still a leader, but an egalitarian whistleblower.
- (4) From *fatalist* to *individualist* is the case of Baron of Munchhausen who survived dying in a swamp together with his horse by pulling his own hairs (a tale presented on chapter 3). This political leader starts to

suspect that he is free, independent and that – sometimes – risky actions can produce good results.

- (5) From *fatalist* to *egalitarian* is the isolated leader who discovers unexpected security in a strongly bonded group, overcoming difficulties by delivering cohesion and representing its members' collective interests.
- (6) From *fatalist* to *hierarchist* is the defeatist who faces predictability when rules are imposed. This surprise can have a strong effect on a political leader, and even rescue him from possible disenchantment and disappointment (ultimately leading to a lack Political Will and, therefore, non leadership). For a *fatalistic* leader this change can mean 'good news' and reveals that one is not drowned by rules but one can be 'holding their reins'.
- (7) From *individualist* to *egalitarian* is the prominent leader in an uncertain but free society who, after his own collapse, sees an opportunity in group bonding and uses his personal attributes to, eventually, develop a more charismatic style of leadership. This is the case of "Saul on the road to Damascus, [...] a big man in a growth industry – Christian persecution – [becoming] charismatic leader of an egalitarian and persecuted sect (Thompson *et al.*, 1990: 76). It is also possible to explain the case of political leaders who, after office, become leaders of activist groups.
- (8) From *individualist* to *hierarchist* is the path taken along the 'diagonal of bureaucratization' (Hood, 1995). Weber had already suggested this migration strategy and it results from the partial collapse of his world view, particularly when the context is getting more complex than expected, or the problems to solve are becoming bigger and needing more resources. A growing organization can follow the same path. A political leader who changes from an *individualistic* style to a *hierarchic* one sees on rule and institutional design an answer to political challenges. A financial crisis, for instance, can lead to a demand for government intervention.

- (9) From *individualist* to *fatalist* is the disenchantment move occurring when even skill is not rewarded. This political leader, who was convinced that his skills, expertise, and taking the necessary risks would lead him and any eventual followers to success, perceives the world and those around him as being stuck by unexplained rules, run over by circumstances and tied to an ‘intractable context’. This surprise leads to a more erratic and probably chaotic style of giving guidance to followers.
- (10) From *egalitarian* to *hierarchist* is what Max Weber called the “routinization of charisma”. A political leader might understand the need to impose some rules on his own group and, that way, get better results – even from his followers’ point of view. This can occur, for instance, when a social movement’s leader becomes elected to office and faces the surprise of ‘prosper through rules’.
- (11) From *egalitarian* to *fatalist* is the leader shocked with the fact that caution and strong group bonding does not work. This total surprise leads to group desertion and to the rejection of the old ‘way of life’. This political leader becomes an erratic and resourceless one.
- (12) From *egalitarian* to *individualist* fits the leader to whom success is achievable outside group borders. Networks of several agents and groups will have more success than the former strategy. Seeing himself only as one agent – ore representing a small group – amongst several others compels this political leader to interact and look for answers through risk acceptance, entrepreneurship and skills development.

All these recognizable stories used to illustrate each change suggest they are socially viable. Contrary to what Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky argued after presenting their own description of these changes (to which we owe important insights), our model offers more understanding on what happens at a microchange level. They exemplified this imperfection arguing that the same result can occur through different changing paths (Thompson *et al*, 1990: 78), which we are now able to confirm through our suggested model of different migration strategies.

Already, an important hypothesis must be taken into account as a result of the Change Strategy: one particular style of leadership can be a consequence of the same migration strategy but resulting from different starting points. For instance, a political leader can adopt an egalitarian style of leadership after changing from a *hierarchical* or *individualistic* ‘original position’.

#### *Retreat Migration Strategy*

This Migration Strategy is the only one where we suggest a two steps analysis: in the first movement the leader changes his style of leadership from the one he would adopt as a consequence of his expectations about the world (his *intention*) to a style driven by interpreted *possibilities*. The second step occurs as a Return Strategy – the political leader is not available to concede: his *intention* (personal interests, individual preferences, own values or moral reasons) should prevail.

In this case we can use the above description of each change migration processes in order to illustrate the ‘transitional position’ a leader adopts temporarily.

#### *Influence Migration Strategy*

All the *surprises* that lead individuals to adopt a Migration Strategy have a strong potential of destruction – in extreme cases it is arguable that a conflict between expected and actual worlds (a strong incompatibility between *intention* and *possibility*) can lead to what we previously called ‘lack of Political Will’.

One of the answers to these conflicts is set by the Influence Strategy, where individuals tend to moderate their disequilibrium by not giving in to a complete change but adapting their dispositional approach to action. A political leader in this context will try to adopt the most compatible style of leadership, which will allow him to cope with both his *intention* to act and his interpreted *possibilities*.

In Figure 4.3 we illustrate the effort to deductively suggest socially possible styles which would result from different influence migrations. In some cases better leadership styles “labels” are needed in order to offer better explanation and thicker description by just reading its name – only possible through in-depth analysis of each case and, if possible, accompanied by empirical research on confirmatory cases.

Possibility Intention	Hierarchy (Perverse/ Tolerant)	Fatalism (Capricious)	Individualism (Benign)	Egalitarianism (Ephemeral)
Hierarchy (Perverse/Tolerant)		<i>Protector</i>	<i>Regulator</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>
Fatalism (Capricious)	<i>Protector</i>		<i>Technocrat</i>	<i>Adhocrat</i>
Individualism (Benign)	<i>Regulator</i>	<i>Technocrat</i>		<i>Collaborator</i>
Egalitarianism (Ephemeral)	<i>Facilitator</i>	<i>Adhocrat</i>	<i>Collaborator</i>	

Table 4.3 – Political Will and styles of leadership resulting from ‘nature conflict’: Influence strategy

Although with probable slight differences (but not enough to explore them theoretically), we claim that the same style resulting from an Influence Migration Strategy can occur by *intention* influenced by *possibility* or *vice versa*. For illustration matters we will use only the first case, therefore avoiding repetition.

- (1) A *hierarchist* influenced by fatalism would adopt a *protecting* style of leadership, ‘offering’ followers the guidance they – otherwise, the leader thinks – would not get. If influenced by individualism, then he would follow the ‘debureaucratization’ diagonal relying on more regulatory strategies to lead followers. In the case of facing an egalitarian ‘world’, he would perform as a *facilitator* allowing horizontal integration between different political actors and organizations, but still offering guidance (reserving for himself a lesser observable but still important principal role). These political leaders win elections depending on the quality of their decisions.

- (2) A *fatalist* influenced by individualism has slight more confidence on skills and opportunities for success, and ‘offers’ followers the needed occasional guidance through acquired competencies which he believes to hold, adopting a *technocratic* style. When influenced by egalitarianism the *fatalist* can become an *adhocrat* – meaning a political leader that when (and only when) influenced by social pressure, advocacy and lobbying, reacts to groups’ demands. The *adhocrat* is highly dependent on political accountability, being, most of the times, a follower of the ‘direction of the wind’ given by the public.

These political leaders win elections relying on their capacity to ‘give people what they want’.

- (3) An *individualist* influenced by egalitarianism chooses a *collaborator* style of leadership. Although conscious of individuality and self ruling, reinforcing the network’s ‘social glue’ will help to attain success. However, while the *facilitator* still considers his role to be ‘more important’ or determinant for the success of the network (hierarchy-egalitarian influence strategy), the *collaborator* sees himself as ‘one amongst others’.

These political leaders will be re-elected due, solely, to personality.

As claimed before, all these resulting styles might comprise minor variations. For instance, a *hierarchist* influenced by egalitarianism might adopt facilitation as a strategy to assure horizontal integration, as for the opposite (*egalitarian* biased by a hierarchic social context) one should consider a bottom-up approach to facilitation, reinforcing the co-operative advantage of bringing group cohesion to hierarchical strategies of command. The same analysis is necessary when studying an *adhocrat* – if he is a *fatalist* influenced by *egalitarianism* one must expect accidental and arbitrary command, while if the opposite bias is at stake one should anticipate more dependency on his relationships with social groups.

However, all these details – in some cases particularly difficult to identify – would just contribute to the complexity of our model, and require further empirical verification. Even though they might constitute social possibilities, their degree of specification and detail are superfluous on this stage of theory development.



### *Support Migration Strategy*

The reinforcement of the leader's dispositional path to action which might occur from the conflict between expected and interpreted world natures sets another Migration Strategy. In these cases political leaders react strongly against their interpreted possibilities to act and develop extreme styles of leadership 'inside' its 'original position' quadrant on the grid-group framework. Therefore:

- (1) A *hierarchist* opts to dominate and repress using all his available resources through rule imposing and top-down command. This *autocratic* form of leadership has been suggested by Wildavsky (1989)
- (2) A *fatalist* can become a *despotic* leader since group effort and rational calculation are not available resources for success. Despotism in non consolidated states with weak democratic institutions is more probable to happen if the leader sees this as an opportunity.
- (3) An *individualist* reaches provisory control over followers through the form of *meteoric* leadership. His only way to succeed is exploring the limits of risk, chance and catching the right opportunities. Revealing to others, particularly followers, that there is no solution in strong social ties or in imposed norms is the best way to progress.
- (4) An *egalitarian* – confident of his capabilities and reacting to hostile contexts – looks for the adequate strategies to provide the reinforcement of group bonding and the expected 'messianic' answers to his followers, through *charisma*.

### *Escape Migration Strategy*

This sets the most troubling strategy for research since it translates de possibility of unknowing which resulting style one will face. At least we get to know which styles are not probable to occur if this migration takes place. As an example, a *hierarchist* puzzled by the surprise of unpredictability (fatalism) and unable to cope with it might get refuge under a completely different leadership style: *egalitarian* or *individualist*.

We are to believe that this kind of strategy needs more empirical confirmation, and if probable to happen, it tends to be provisory or dramatically leading – finally – to a sense

of ‘lack of Political Will’. Eventually, one should also consider the hypothesis presented by Mary Douglas which considered fatalism as a harbour for those non adapted individuals to each of the other three rationalities (Douglas, *u.d.*). Therefore considering this to be the ‘resulting position’ of every Escape Migration Strategy.

#### *New property spaces*

A more intricate representation of the resulting property spaces from the grid-group typology applied to the operationalization of Political Will is presented on Figure 4.10. Besides allowing a more complex interpretation of the framework, assuming each axis as a continuum (from extreme individualism, scoring the minimum both on the grid and the group dimensions, to extreme hierarchy, scoring the maximum on both), it permits a visual illustration of the consequences of all the Migration Strategies associated with leadership styles, particularly those that provide the justification for the existence of sub-types of leadership styles (the cases of ‘Influence’ and ‘Support’ Migration Strategies).

An integrated version of this fourfold representation within the same ‘map’ of property spaces would depict more evidently the similarities and overlaps of types, but, in contrast, would complexify its illustration. Therefore, there should not be given any particular attention to the dimensions of the cells nor its borders since this is only intended to represent a rough picture of the new framework. It would be illogical and social unviable to present a framework of leadership styles based on strict and perfectly defined borders. Once more, this analytical instrument allows future research to better understand political leaders’ behaviours, based on Political Will and Grid-group Theory, more easily mapping its styles and – eventually – permitting further developments and more precision (both for illustrative and labelling matters).

As claimed before we expect these property spaces to be socially viable, and for each one of them a compatible and reliable story was given. We avoided any other possibilities available, from considering other eventual migration strategies (logically doable but producing social impossibilities) or looking for extreme cases where viability would be impossible to prove through empirical verification. Logical deductive moves and plausible inductive readings of a great deal of research on leadership converge on the suggested matrix as a useful map of our explanatory options.

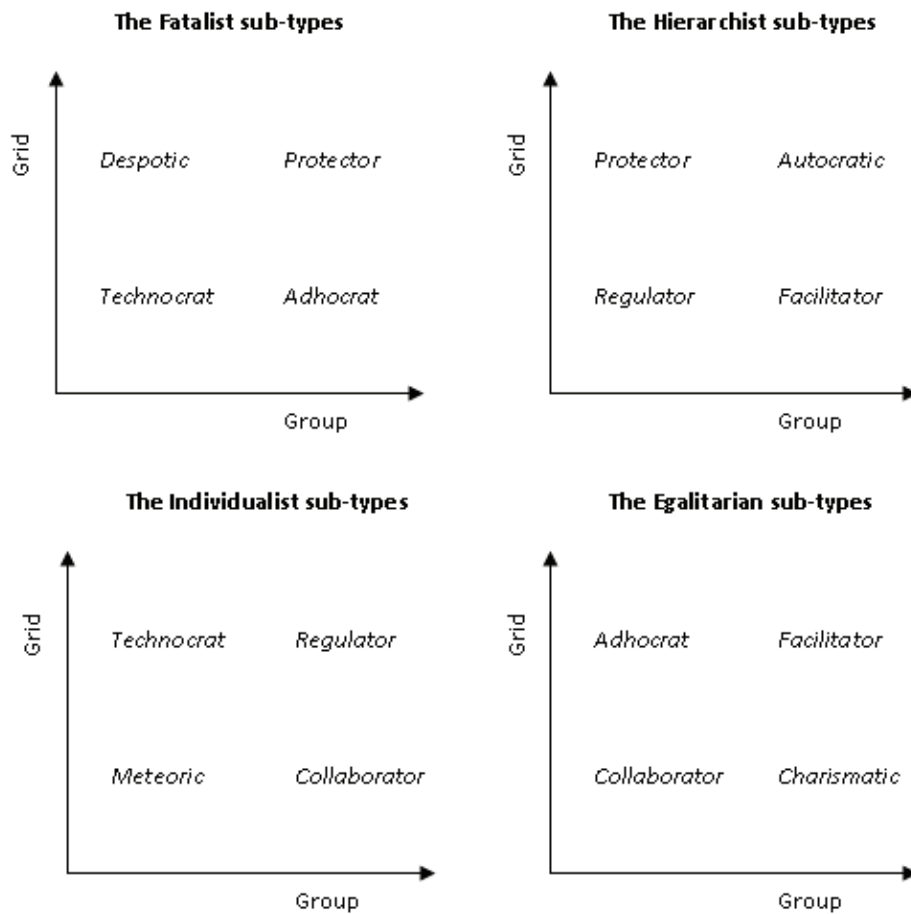


Figure 4.10 –Leadership styles property spaces: types and sub-types

From Table 4.4 – where we present all theoretical possible alternatives – it is very clear that just by style observation and assessment it is impossible to ‘retrodict’ and understand how the leaders Political Will developed. The same can be said about prediction: understanding what constitutes the leader’s Political Will is not enough to explain his leadership style (except in the cases where there is a nature confirmation). Therefore we must consider the absolute necessity of appraising both (1) the two dimensions of Political Will and (2) how – in action – the leader coped with *surprises*.

*Intention, possibility* and – in several real cases – a *migration strategy* must be taken into account to better understand the resulting observed leadership style and comprehend the role of Political Will in its formation.

POSSIBILITY INTENTION	Hierarchy	Fatalism	individualism	Egalitarianism
<b>Hierarchy</b>				
<i>Confirmation</i>	Hierarchist			
<i>Change</i>		Fatalist	Individualist	Egalitarian
<i>Retreat</i>		Hierarchist	Hierarchist	Hierarchist
<i>Influence</i>		Protector	Regulator	Facilitator
<i>Support</i>		Autocrat	Autocrat	Autocrat
<i>Escape</i>		One of the other	One of the other	One of the other
<b>Fatalism</b>				
<i>Confirmation</i>		Fatalist		
<i>Change</i>	Hierarchist		Individualist	Egalitarian
<i>Retreat</i>	Fatalist		Fatalist	Fatalist
<i>Influence</i>	Protector		Technocrat	Adhocrat
<i>Support</i>	Despotic		Despotic	Despotic
<i>Escape</i>	One of the other		One of the other	One of the other
<b>Individualism</b>				
<i>Confirmation</i>			Individualist	
<i>Change</i>	Hierarchist	Fatalist		Egalitarian
<i>Retreat</i>	Individualist	Individualist		Individualist
<i>Influence</i>	Regulator	Technocrat		Collaborator
<i>Support</i>	Meteoric	Meteoric		Meteoric
<i>Escape</i>	One of the other	One of the other		One of the other
<b>Egalitarianism</b>				
<i>Confirmation</i>				Egalitarian
<i>Change</i>	Hierarchist	Fatalist	Individualist	
<i>Retreat</i>	Egalitarian	Egalitarian	Egalitaria	
<i>Influence</i>	Facilitator	Adhocrat	Collaborator	
<i>Support</i>	Charismatic	Charismatic	Charismatic	
<i>Escape</i>	One of the other	One of the other	One of the other	

Table 4.4 – Political Will and styles of leadership resulting from ‘nature confirmation’ and CRISE Strategies

### *Concluding remarks*

This new typology solves research problems like those given by leaders scoring both high on hierarchical disposition to act (*intention*), but having obvious different styles of leadership. The only main difference might be “the way” they perceived “how to achieve” success in action – one through his own individual action, the other working with

different stakeholders. Therefore setting different *cognitive* paths to actions resulting from a conflicting approach to the ‘real world’ they are in.

Our definition and its operationalization can, therefore, constitute a useful tool to understand leadership styles. From a simple and acceptable definition of Political Will (“must” plus “can”) we can build an extensive framework to understand a complex array of different styles of leadership, allowing both prediction and retrodiction.

Relevant propositions must be taken into account as resulting from all the confirmation and migration strategies:

- (1) One particular style of leadership can be a consequence of the same migration strategy but resulting from different starting points;
- (2) The same style can result from different strategies and the same starting point (just in the case of *confirmation* and *retreat* strategies);
- (3) The same style can result from different strategies and different starting points (for instance as in the case of a *hierarchist* by *retreat* or by *change*).

Additionally, we argue that ‘strong will’, or more correctly as we suggested on chapter 3, ‘strong *wanting*’ can produce the necessary feedback loop to even change the cognitive dimension of Political Will. In fact, the heuristics tradition relied on the assumption that belief change is a matter of cognition. However, and more consistent with our approach to Grid-group Theory, beliefs and values correlate strongly (Sjöberg and Biel, 1983). It is hard to account for this phenomena based on a purely cognitive framework, alternatively suggesting beliefs as value driven.

It is commonly argued that a particular political leader reveals ‘strong will’, when facing a context that would seem adverse at first sight, and is even able to ‘change’ it. As we have tried to show this is not the case of strong Political Will, but of a particular set of conditions that enabled his Will, and made him react to ‘reality’ using a particular strategy. More than ‘strong will’ we should be speaking of a Support Strategy or even a Confirmation one (if the cognitive dimension of Political Will was biased by its dispositional one). If ‘strong will’ is being ‘stubborn’, then we should more accurately say ‘strong wanting’ together with the sense of being able to act. When we refer to a leader

expressing how we appraise his ‘strong will’, it might certainly be – using our terminology – a strong *intent*. If it goes through and achieves what he wants, then that must certainly be Political Will.

We are not offering cultural determinism claiming an important role for contextual political culture nor complete contingency based on leadership as an exercise of agency. We intend to provide a tool to better understand and anticipate the options available and foreclosed to a leader. In fact, our purpose was to enhance the opportunities given by Ellis and Wildavsky’s analysis on their seminal work on Presidential Leadership. They argued then: “[The theory] does not allow us to predict which of the possible options or strategies a leader will pursue or whether he will be successful” (Ellis and Wildavsky, 1989: 2). Our operationalization of Political Will gives further and more precise information on which mechanisms are at stake when leadership styles are considered, therefore enlarging our understanding about Political Leadership.

Aaron Wildavsky repeatedly emphasised that Grid-group Cultural Theory does not need to be perfect and fully explain all social and political aspects of life; it just had to be better than the available alternatives.





## **CHAPTER V – UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP STYLES – THE CASE OF PORTUGUESE MAYORS: RESEARCH THESIS, QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

*The more we learn about the world, and the deeper our learning, the more conscious, specific, and articulate will be our knowledge of what we do not know, our knowledge of our ignorance.*  
Karl Popper, On the Sources of Knowledge and Ignorance

### **5.1. Preliminary epistemological stances**

#### *Reasons for a phenomenological approach*

A new approach to Political Leadership, and in particular to its different styles of action, has been suggested in the previous chapters. We underlined the fact that, in order to understand how a political leader acts, one needs to offer a deeper and eventually more complex perspective on human action. Following Alfred Schütz's work on phenomenology and hermeneutics, we refused to treat political agents as natural sciences approach their units of analysis or, as the German sociologist and economist Adolph Lowe puts it, as "insensitive particles moving blindly though lawfully to blind stimuli" (Lowe, 1977: 61). As Lowe claimed, social sciences deal with "purposeful actors who 'move' only after they have interpreted their field of action in terms of their goals and their common sense knowledge" (Lowe, 1977).

Social sciences need to be conceived of "as a hermeneutic and self-reflective discipline" (Simonds, 1978:65). A.P. Simonds reference to Karl Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge shares the same viewpoint as Schütz's, which is clearly anti-positivist (Forstater, 2001: 212). Combining an interpretative approach to agent's intentionality with the claim that meaning can only be reached through the analysis of the context where he is in, this perspective offered several and relevant clues for our research agenda. The influence of phenomenology extends beyond philosophical borders and offers relevant inputs to the social sciences (Natanson, 1963).

Consistently with our concern expressed on a need to seek a more complete and integral – as to say realist – approach to human action, which we have hopefully managed to explain in the chapter on Political Will, James Buchanan emphasizes the impossibility of basing knowledge on single paths and universal laws: "persons act from many motives,

and the economic model concentrates attention only on one of the many possible forces behind action” (Buchanan, 2003: 9).

No model of behaviour, even in restricted contexts, must be taken for granted as being a provider of catch-all explanations. In fact it is not our knowledge but the way we access it that needs to be tightened under clear and testable laws. We followed this same path as we were not seeking motives for political leadership actions, but in search of understanding on how complex, disparate, and often contradictory motives are expressed through acts.

Raymond Aron’s work on German sociology (Aron, 1964) pointed out the fact that Lowe’s distinction between behaviour and motivation must be regarded as a fundamental insight, as he recognized that “the understanding of motives does not by itself constitute a safe basis for postulating any specific course of action as necessary, that is, causally exclusive” (Lowe, 1942: 436). Positivist approaches tend to combine the two, considering that assess of *action* is enough – with the necessary methodological tools – to explain *reasons for action*. However, as Lowe explicitly recognized, one needs to be aware of the intersubjectivity of human life: in the *lifeworld* (Schütz, 1972) motivations are the “result of fragmentary experience and information, of speculation and hunches, and [...] of the communication with others” (Lowe, 1977: 16). As noted by Ludwig von Mises, “identical external events result sometimes in different human responses, and different external events produce sometimes the same human response” (Mises, 1985: 18). The same argument is relevant in Hayek’s ‘The Sensory Order’:

“psychology must start from stimuli defined in physical terms and proceed to show why and how the senses classify similar physical stimuli sometimes as alike and sometimes as different, and why different physical stimuli will sometimes appear as similar and sometimes as different” (Hayek, 1952: 7-8).

Complex phenomena as the social ones require the capacity to engage in a hermeneutic approach with a consistent application of subjectivism. To grasp meanings about human action is clearly a different stance than the one of obtaining data from physical ‘reality’. This methodological dualism recognizes that human phenomena present

a different set of issues and difficulties for the researcher, with important consequences namely on prediction and falsification requirements. As Hayek claimed, we may content ourselves with “pattern prediction” rather than more precise ones (Hayek, 1967: 27).

Subjectivism may lead us to consider scientific theories as unverifiable and impossible to test, which is false. Actually, subjectivism refers to the postulation of human mind – and, consequently, decision processes – not being guided by imposed external events. It is this approach that allows us to understand the autonomy of individual choice, and therefore asking us to focus on the processes of choosing. In a world of autonomous decisions, the impacts of actions are not only unknown, but especially unknowable – the course of action and its results depend on the individual’s decision and on other’s actions (which are uncontrollable and mostly unpredictable). Thus, subjectivism and human action are inseparable ideas.

Although it is possible to describe action through physical terms, and indeed provide important data, hermeneutics and interpretation offer the additional information that allows understanding it. As Roger Koppl (2008) argues, it results from an important distinction between the analysis of complex phenomena and simple phenomena, which are present both in social sciences and in natural sciences. To illustrate this, demography and epidemiology are given as examples of simple phenomena in social sciences, and biology is presented as a complex one in natural sciences (Koppl, 2008: 118).

These arguments strengthen Alfred Schütz’s approach to human action, particularly regarding *causality*. As a “rational capability to relate the means to the end, the antecedent with the consequent” (Aranzadi *et al*, 2009: 26), causality is confined to the agent – that is to say, each individual subjectively perceives his experiences and his circumstances, and selects causality patterns. As argued by Schütz (1972), causality is something private to the individual and not subdued to physical external determinism. Therefore, only the agent can explain his motives: “in order to know the scope of the woodcutter’s project, it is necessary to ask him about it” (Aranzadi *et al*, 2009: 27).

As a consequence of this constituent element of individuality, every model of explanation of human action reduced to preferences and constraints and stripped from interpretive understanding misses the more complex processes of agency. Treating constraints as objective boundaries and preferences as measurable assumptions can lead to biased understanding of human action. In fact both must be considered subjective as they

depend ultimately on individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards their *lifeworld*. In order to solve this problem, Schütz's hermeneutic approach lays the foundations for better modelling, as it relates the quality of explanation to the accuracy of its assumptions about human motivations.

*Epistemological difficulties to overcome*

Underlining the relevance of Political Will as a determinant factor to explain the style of leadership of political actors was only possible because we were neither seeking to explain *what* drives leaders nor to address the causality issue of *why* they behave as they do. Although both answers are implicitly identifiable through a closer look upon our suggested approach, we were consciously focusing on answering *how* does the process of 'motivations becoming actions' occur, and *which* different results it offers. The first important step is to consider a realist approach to – and an always incomplete knowledge on – human motivations. We believe this was possible because we relied on pluralist perspectives, like Perez Lopez's (1991), and particularly due to the fact that we were not aiming at that specific issue. Secondly, scientific objectivity and ethical neutrality is certainly more achievable through a research focus on answering *how* a phenomenon works than risking partiality on explaining *why* it happens.

Alexander Wendt suggests that *how* and *what* questions ask what makes up entities or systems, as exemplifies:

“Constitutive questions usually take the form of ‘how-possible?’ or ‘what?’ ‘How was it possible for Stalin, a single individual, to exercise so much power over the Soviet people?’ ‘How is it possible for Luxembourg to survive in an anarchic world next door to Great Powers like France and Germany?’ [...] are all requests for information about the conditions of possibility for natural and social kinds. [...] What we seek in asking these questions is insight into what it is that instantiates some phenomenon, not why that phenomenon comes about” (Wendt, 1998: 105).

Offering answers to *how* Political Will works – and our conceptualization (cf. chapter IV) sought it – is a manner of opening the way to all different and possible human

interests, morals, needs and motivations to take their place in the real world. A theory on Political Will and its subsequent operationalization allowed, in fact, even more than just explaining *how* it works – what would seem a sufficient endeavour; it delivered rich and plural answers to our underlying question: *which* political leadership styles can be identified.

Thirdly it is important to assure that the needed adaptability that human free will and behaviour's possibility of change both imply. In fact, it is impossible to predict how one's mind is to be determined, and therefore one can only assure *how* the mechanisms of action work consistently with the unavoidable motivational shifts. Finally, and as a consequence of focusing our analysis on Political Will, besides the severe implications of considering the possibility of free will, one must take into account willingness to be unique to each individual.

However, one of the serious problems with a phenomenological approach to human action stems from the fact that one needs to consider the complexity of human life and preserve, at the same time, the needed scientific rigour. Alfred Schütz faced this problem as his main goal was to consider “a scientific method which does not subjugate the meaning-endowed actor to objective impersonal laws” (Gorman, 1977: 36). A second dilemma results from the researcher being also part of the *lifeworld* – which might contribute to the double hermeneutic problem. This is partly the reason for Schütz to consider the subject of social sciences more complex than the one of natural sciences: the first employs “constructs of the second degree” (Schütz, 1962a: 6). The first order constructs of the reality are employed by the ‘objects’ of research – the agents. But the everyday person is an agent rather than a mere theoretical observer; therefore he possesses motivations, interests and preferences that guide them. By contrast, the researcher is not an agent in the relations he is analysing, and consequently does not belong to the same *lifeworld* and should not interfere on the intersubjectivity relations that create the meanings he is trying to reach and understand. As Schütz claims, social sciences must satisfy the same sort of requirements as other sciences: theories must be precise, consistent, testable, and the results must be controllable and reproducible (Schütz, 1962a: 49-52). He thus insists that the scientist must maintain a distance from the phenomena, being truly an observer and not a participant. However, the limit that must not be crossed is the one of reducing human action to the observable behaviour – as positivists do; the main task is to

provide credible models to understand action and to make explicit the meanings of it for the agents themselves (Schütz, 1964a: 7).

A third problem regards the fact that the object of analysis can change, even by his action. As argued by Lowe, an approach to social phenomena “with invariable data is defective from the very outset” (Lowe, 1935: 138). In fact, the activity of agents can change their context of reference, and even from a structuralist perspective produce considerable alterations with significant effects on behaviour.

Both the phenomenological approach, which allows us to provide consistent tools for answering our research questions on political leaders’ styles, and the very reality we are observing (agents with Political Will) emphasize that the primary object of our approach is the individual – “acting and experiencing beings, considered in their myriad relations to others, but also with an eye to their own, meaning-constituting subjective lives” (Overgaard and Zahavi, 2009: 9). We are not claiming that there is no role for institutions, structures, cultural contexts; rather we are insisting on the Schutzian perspective which saw those as a sort of useful ‘intellectual shorthand’, but presupposing interpreting and acting individuals (Schütz 1962a: 34).

#### *Ideal-type methodological advantages*

Our epistemological concerns are, therefore, translated into the need to seek explanation on political leadership styles that assumes the unavoidability of scientific *ignorance* (Friedman, 2005) and offers simultaneously *realism* on motives, *neutrality* on approaches and *plurality* of answers. *Ignorance* recognizes the fact that for the researcher it is impossible to assess all inputs and outputs of an observed social mechanism of object. *Realism* asserts that causation for human action can derive from multiple factors, which can ultimately be unknown. *Neutrality* is given by a focus on mechanisms rather than reasons, by answering *how* rather than *why*. And *plurality* must be attained through offering a model that allows the possibility of generating open results, permitting outputs (actions) to be multiple and diverse.

Theories are needed because the world is too complex to be self-evident and, therefore, ‘truth’ is not obvious. However, theories are no more self-evident than the phenomena they are supposed to explain: inescapably one must add *falsifiability* as an important characteristic of a theory (Popper, 1972). However, Karl Popper’s criterion of

demarcation is not a positive but a negative one; therefore *falsifiability* only tells us what is not scientific and not what is scientific. Refuting a particular statement does not mean necessarily that a theory has been refuted. Nevertheless one must assure it is open for refutation. Finally, it must be *prohibitive*, not allowing particular events to occur, and therefore, if a theory is unable to explain them it can be refuted.

Schütz's solutions to these concerns are rooted in his ideal-type methodology, which assumes that individuals "under typically similar circumstances act in a way typically similar to that in which [they] acted before in order to bring about a typically similar state of affairs" (Schütz, 1962b: 20). And it is through processes of typification that individuals constitute meaningful contexts, not as an isolated 'performance' but as the consequence of interactions, previous experiences, and socialization in everyday life. Order results from these models for rational action, which is the same perspective as the one presented by the plural rationalities delivered by Grid-group's Theory (see Chapter IV) as it offers heuristics on how society is possible and on how the world works.

"It is true that human beings create meaning. But it is also true that it is possible to make statements of regularities that help in explaining and even predicting (or retrodicting) the human construction of meaning. Subjectivity need not rule out regularity as long as different sorts of people feel subjective in similar ways with regard to similar objects" (Thompson *et al*, 1990: xiii-xiv).

In fact, individuals do not only experience objects as typified, but also situations, motivations, actions and contexts. A simple action as putting a letter in a mailbox involves complex and several kinds of simultaneous typifications (Schütz, 1962a: 17): assuming other – the postman – will do well his job and perform typical actions in order to assure the letter will arrive at the destination, and so forth. This is where Alfred Schütz sees social science as aiming "to form objective concepts and objectively verifiable theory of subjective meaning structures" (Schütz 1963: 246), building models of typical actions.

For Schütz, ideal types isolate certain characteristics of individuals that are relevant to the question at hand and given through interpretation. Typologies must be constructed in



order to offer broad applicability, or in Schütz words containing *anonymity*<sup>1</sup>. This way agreeing with Mises's criticism of Weber's methodology (Schütz, 1972: 243), where ideal types result from the observation of particular individuals in particular circumstances. His theory is a different one, and recognizes that it should not be "a statement of what usually happens, but of what necessarily happens" (Mises [1933], cited in Schütz, 1972: 245).

Accordingly to Schütz, the construction of a typology that intends to attain such *anonymity* standards must follow three 'postulates' (Schütz, 1963): (1) *logical consistency*, which requires the "highest degree of clarity and distinctness"; (2) *subjective interpretation*, needed to explain the observed facts as the result of the typical contents of individuals' mind; and (3) *adequacy* of a model of action "constructed in such a way that a human act [...] would be understandable for the actor himself as well as for his fellow men in terms of common-sense interpretation of everyday life". The resulting typology present what real people eventually do in real situations and must be coherent with its theoretical assumptions.

Finally, Schütz added a postulate of *rationality*, which requires that the ideal type "must be constructed in such a way that the actor in the living world would perform the typified act if he had a clear and distinct scientific knowledge of all the elements relevant to his choice and the constant tendency to choose the most appropriate means for the realizations of the most appropriate end" (Schütz, 1964b: 86). The mechanical aspects of this rationality condition assert that there is something about people that makes them behave in regular and – usually – predictable ways. This allows typologies to generalize about regularities, but they are only acceptable if the other *postulates* are accomplished, otherwise it just represents a handicapped examination of what is actually a more complex and shifting phenomena.

#### *Deductive theory development*

In the political leadership research arena, the previous considerations remind us of the need to unveil particular inputs, perceptions, motivations and preferences of key

<sup>1</sup> "The more anonymous the typifying construct is the more detached it is from the uniqueness of the individual fellowman involved, the fewer aspects also of his personality and behavior pattern enter the typification as being relevant for the purpose at hand, for the sake of which the type has been constructed. If we distinguish between (subjective) personal types and (objective) course-of-action types we may say that increasing anonymisation of the construct leads to the superseding of the former by the latter. In complete anonymisation the individuals are supposed to be interchangeable, and the course-of-action type refers to behavior of 'whomever' acting in the way defined by the construct" (Schütz, 1962a: 17–18).

agents, in order to offer a more realist understanding of their behaviour. As Betty Glad reminds,

“this is not to say that broader political factors do not influence the choices made by key individuals. Indeed, as Kingdon (1984) has pointed out, the policy-making process in most Western polities, for example, is one that depends on the confluence of opportunities for action with a leadership that is willing to take advantage of those opportunities” (Glad, 2002: 13-14).

The deductive process we presented in the previous chapters stems from the assumption that science is a matter of using particularities to test for or against valid laws. Deductive reasoning might offer *aprioristic* knowledge which – by its inner logic – can be considered accurate. Mises’s *praxeology* was built on this assumption – claiming that the theoretical conclusions must be true if no logic error has been made. Human action is too complex for a treatment which considers them as passive non-adaptive subjects. Instead we should isolate its logical processes. We did this when building the concept of Political Will, since a self-evident axiom of action was considered: individuals take conscious action toward chosen goals (Mises, 1999). Theory deduction has an important role in delivering significant information on human behaviour, since it avoids data misinterpretation which can be correlated to multiple potential chains of causation, due to its inherently ambiguous character and subject to a multitude of influences which cannot be separated or quantified.

Our typology of leadership styles could fit this condition; however one cannot know *how accurate* it is without control and testing. Verification is needed in order to confirm whether the expected ideal types correspond to any portion of individuals. But, more than corroboration we seek refutation by conceivable events, empirically testing if it applies to real world cases, even if our portion is small: a *marginal agent* can refute all previous consideration. We are following Karl Popper’s claim that no validation is possible, even though repeated events through time were consistent with a given theory – just one refutation is needed to consider it as false.

It is only possible to have access to knowledge about the *mechanisms* that explain observable human action (Schütz, 1972) as the ‘truth’ about *why* it happens is unreachable.

*Predicability* is only possible if motives are given and mechanisms are known in order to allow possibility to explain the multiplicity of results. Thus, one must assume that even a theory on *how* a particular phenomenon works must be equally treated as a hypothesis that might explain part of it. Our operationalization of Political Will allowed a wide range of possible examples of conceivable events that might contradict its assumptions. *Falsifiability*, as a condition, has been attained.

In order to provide methodological consistence to these predicaments and for the study of political leaders' intentions and their opportunities for action – occurring in real world shifting contexts – case studies seem particularly useful. As Yin claims, it enables us to look into phenomena in context, where individuals are experiencing interactions, using multiple sources and allowing 'thick description' (Yin, 1989: 23). If we add comparability through multiple case studies it is possible to build 'real world experiments' in which our research variables and sample are chosen accordingly to the broader question we are addressing. In the case of political leaders, it is possible to hold constant formal roles and compare different individuals performing the same – or similar – roles.

## 5.2. Conceptual framework

In this research we assumed leadership as an important feature of democratic societies, particularly in contexts where the personalization of politics is an increasing phenomenon. However, the nature of political leadership is changing, accompanying the growing complexity of contemporary governance, the rise of participatory incentives, and the deepening of accountability procedures. In order to provide more understanding on how this works, several attempts to capture and explore different styles of leadership have been made.

We claimed a determinant role for Political Will in the process of understanding leadership styles. From literature on democratic leadership one could assume – from what is a common agreement – that having Political Will would produce a kind – and just *one kind* – of leader: the messianic, visionary and heroic one. However, we acknowledge the need to expand the notion of Political Will, stating that it might produce other styles of leadership.

We presented schematically how Political Will is ‘responsible’ for diverse, although limited, styles of leadership, and identified *intention* and *possibility* as its two dimensions. When operationalized by what we have called a theory of limited rationalities (offered by Grid-group Theory) both dimensions produced a typology of styles that include and go beyond the existent scholarship on this theme.

### 5.2.1. Political leadership styles

We followed Elgie’s (1995: 23) approach to political leadership as “the product of the interaction between leaders and the leadership environment with which they are faced”, and added our own formulation *as the capacity and possibility to exercise power over others and situations* (see Chapter II). Elgie (1995) claimed that political leadership is a consequence of a process where leaders not only change the course of the policy process, but are themselves shaped by a set of factors. It is this interdependence between leaders’ perceptions and the structures and rules that influence leadership that is highlighted by Judd (2000): “leaders have the ability to make choices, but within the parameters imposed both by political arrangements and by the external forces”.

Leadership styles were not explained by personal traits (charisma and other individual characteristics will therefore be excluded) but by *intention* and *possibility* – thus Political Will. Ultimately leadership styles or political action result from this individual decision. We have tried to translate this in our definition of Political Will: *an individual’s intent to act through interpreted possibilities in order to change the public state of affairs* (see chapter III) – it results from *the perception of* a particular problem, *believing* that there is a solution for it, and *having the necessary resources and power* to do it. As argued before, we will not use a normative approach to this theme explaining what should be the style of a leader, but rather how do leaders decide intentionally to act in a certain manner, due to their own will. Therefore, more than identifying the determinants of a particular style of leadership, we framed which factors could have influence over the intentional action of the leader. Doing this, we assumed that all the three factors identified by Vivien Lowndes and Steve Leach – context, constitutions and capabilities (Lowndes and Leach, 2004) – are relevant when understood as so by agents. Therefore, in order to grasp the *intention* and *possibility*, we will need to understand: (1) if the leader is aware and how is he aware of his environment; (2) how he sees the power structure inside his institution, his

influence over the governance network and his political autonomy; and (3) if he feels capable of acting in a certain manner and if performing that way his actions will produce the desirable effects. Thus, how is he aware? To what extent does he feel autonomous? And, does he believe his leadership style will be politically effective?

To venture into explanation of Political Will, and as a consequence of leadership styles, we needed to set some boundaries, not always consensual in literature, but strong enough to be accepted as delimiting different styles from one another. Within the existing contested boundaries they often only offer typologies that capture partially the whole picture. We aimed at providing a logical and empirical claim that combines different kinds of causal segments, with a particular emphasis on an interpretative approach to individual behavior, based on leaders' perceptions of their *context*, their *position* and their *political efficacy*.

We can find all these three dimensions in the words of Richard Daley (Mayor of Chicago, quoted in Fenwick, Elcock and McMillan, 2006): “As Mayor, I have to provide long-range vision, pay attention to detail and engage in constant persuasion”.

For research purposes we will focus our attention on the scholarship available on the local governance context.

#### *Political leadership through context awareness*

The first condition is that political leadership unveils different perceptions on the context in which the leader finds himself operating. *Context awareness* might determine how to act – which style to adopt – for the purpose of governing localities. This factor encapsulates the first dimension of leadership styles we've identified (see chapter II) – attitudes and behaviors towards change and problem solving – and the fourth dimension – leaders' perception of their environment. Explaining how mayors understand the complexity of the context wherein they act will contribute to disclose information on *intention* and *possibility*, and consequently to shed light on the comprehension of their leadership style.

Leadership style is, as Cerny (1988: 132) calls it, a ‘contingent consequence of circumstance’, thus profoundly embodied in the environment that surrounds the leader, and impossible to reduce only to personal traits such as charisma and authority. For Kevin Orr “leadership theory has recognised, for well over 30 years, that understanding the context in

which leadership is to be enacted is critical” (Orr, 2004:341). Even from a normative approach – which we have been trying to avoid – several approaches serve to ground this perspective. For instance, Isaiah Berlin explaining the difference between practical and utopian statesmen claimed that “the first are said to ‘understand’, while the second are said not to ‘understand’, the nature of the human material with which they deal” (Berlin, 2000:138). Understanding political leaders as artists rather than scientists, as they challenge every easy explanation of how they are successful, seems to leave no alternative to the use of concepts that exist outside the range of social sciences discourse, such as ‘creativity’, ‘clear-vision’, ‘genius’, and ‘sense of history’. Avoiding this slippery terrain, we merely accepted the idea that leaders’ understanding of their environment is particularly important to explain both dimensions of Political Will and, thus, their leadership style.

In Salisbury words (1964:787) “the mayor is an individual who has [...] enough awareness of the complexity of urban politics”. This determinant is closely grounded on the perspective that leadership in contemporary local democracies is linked with the question of governance as multi-actor network steering (Stoker, 2000). Formal leadership positions, as those of the mayor, are of crucial importance if local governance is at least partially constructed by networks of diverse local stakeholders - “political leadership in democratic and pluralistic systems therefore is interactive in nature” (Haus, 2006).

Focusing on *context awareness* as way of unveiling both dimensions of Political Will, we claim that a higher level of awareness – individuals that understand their environment as a complex network of policy deliberation and service providing agents, with widespread community change and cleavages, identifying the *regime* wherein they act with an high degree of institutional fragmentation in the public and the private realm, and assuming that governing as a interactive process (as opposite to those with low levels of awareness and who sense that their environment is really not so complex) will have a different effect on their leadership style.

We excluded other contextual factors from this dimension, particularly those related to constitutional or institutional determinants, since they set another relevant dimension to explain the *positional* constraints of the leader.



*Political leadership as positional dependent*

The second statement is that a particular style of political leadership is also a consequence of the leader's *sense of autonomy*. This intends to advance that their standpoint in terms of their ability to act results from the before mentioned dimensions of leader/follower relationship and of power delegation (see chapter II). We will expand these dimensions, including also the sense of autonomy towards partisan or ideological foundations, pressures from other levels of government or international agencies, the social composition of a locality, the party composition of municipality's executive board, and towards eventual pre-existing political constraints. This broader notion of autonomy comprises, therefore, both the formal and informal rules of governance determined by context and constitutions, and also the consequences of the leaders' understandings about political accountability – how do they appraise their relations with those that elect and keep them in office. A more individual/proactive or a more consensual/reactive attitude can result from this perception.

There are several approaches that attach relevance to these influential factors. Svvara's (1994) emphasis on the relationships between the mayor and his council; Elgie's (1995) 'institutional structures' and 'needs of society'; John and Cole's (1999) 'contextual', 'institutional', 'party organization' and other 'external' factors; and Judd's (2000) 'national and local pressures' are some of the factors identified. The perception of these constraints give the leader a narrow corridor to walk through that will lead him to a one-way exit: a particular style of leadership. Of course that, in some cases, autonomy from these *understood* restrictions can change by chance, time, action or by the leaders' will. Our argument, however, is that given a particular moment in time the style of leadership results from the leader's *sense of autonomy*.

Accountability sets another challenge. In fact, it is particularly important for the *sense of autonomy*, not from a democratic theory approach, but from the leader's point of view. Being in charge is also being held responsible, liable, and accountable by their constituents. The answer to the inner question: 'what shall I do?' will certainly depend on the leader's position towards citizens and power<sup>2</sup>. Particularly within the local governance

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<sup>2</sup> The ability to influence behaviour and to get people to do things they would not otherwise do, as Pfeffer (1992) describes power, is of particular significance within governance arrangements (Southern, 2002). Hastings (1999) suggested that the issues of power have been largely ignored in studies of partnerships. Location of power was also the main focus of Mouritzen and Svvara's (2002) work.



context, citizens' engagement – a theme of undeniable importance in local regimes theory and of empirical evidence when local governance efficiency is at stake (Brannan, John and Stoker, 2007) – puts pressure on mayoral leadership to act in a more consensual way or in an individualist manner. This “complex and continuous exchange between leadership and citizens and checks and balance to that leadership” (Stoker, 2006) that constitutes accountability might generate, therefore, one of the most intangible but strong forces that moves mayors from one style of leadership to another. It is his *sense of autonomy* that gives him the political will and enables him to act accordingly to a particular style.

Context and institutions matter to influence this sense of autonomy. So does accountability. A third factor is a consequence of the existence (or the lack) of resources – human, physical, economical, technical, and/or his own capabilities. As we have seen in Hambleton and Bullock's (1996) set of needed factors for local governance efficiency, resources are one of the main issues. Also our definition of Political Will sets the sufficiency of resources – *possibility* – as an important dimension to enable Will.

This factor is difficult to unbundle since both situations can put pressure on the leader to move in two different directions. ‘Lack of resources’ might lead him to opt for a more *dependent* style, because he feels limited in action, or might impel him towards an *independent* style of leadership, trying by his own to overcome constraints. Having ‘enough resources’ can leave him with the possibility of ‘resting his case’ and limit his action by a *dependent* way of leading, or might give him the needed energy and thrill to ‘go by his own’. Therefore we need to focus our attention not on the facts that give him the sense of autonomy, but – once again – on how does the leader *interpret* these facts.

We claim that a higher *sense of autonomy* towards constitutions, context, accountability and resources will inspire a more independent style of leadership; otherwise he will act less freely and with strong ‘self-restraints’. It constitutes, therefore, a relevant way of assessing both dimensions of Political Will: *intention* and *possibility*.

#### *Political leadership as efficacy driven*

The third claim is that political leadership depends on the leader's perspective about the success of his intervention. The perception of *political efficacy* is therefore important in determining which style is more appropriate in a particular setting. Levine's (1980)

dichotomy between leaders' will to produce high or low policy impact – that we described as part of the first dimension of leadership styles – fits into this hypothesis if we expand this notion to a broader dichotomy: between leaders' *belief* that his action will or will not have significant policy impact.

Political efficacy throughout its theorization in the social sciences has been thought to come from a combination of political information, belief in the trustworthiness of political institutions, and embeddedness in networks. Political psychologist Bandura (1997) defines political efficacy as the “belief that one can produce effects through political action.” Although normally related to political citizens' socialization theories, we will use here political efficacy in terms of the leaders' belief about their own ability to influence political outcomes (Bandura, 1997). This belief - built on personal capabilities, on the history of pre-existing own successes, and on the eventual constraints generated by the extent of the environment complexity - can guide the leader to believe that his action will produce the desired effects, or, by the contrary, to consider that it ‘won't matter how much effort will be put into action, no result will occur’. Thus, the leadership style should be adequate to accomplish a purpose and to produce the intended or expected result.

Expressing how efficacy is attained provides relevant information on the leader's *intention*, since it reflects what he *must do*, and discloses his perceptions of *possibilities*, as it expresses what he *can do*.

#### *A new framework of styles*

The limitations of the ‘traditional’ leadership styles, particularly because each of them would result from different perceptions of *context*, *position* and *efficacy*, ask for a new explanation and for a more complete and inclusive framework. The new typology of leadership styles that results from the operationalization of the dimensions of Political Will using Grid-group Theory (see Chapter IV) is also a consequence of this arrangement between what one *must do* and what one *can do*, and reflects a significant distinction between *how things are*, and how does the leader *believe they are* (how does he see them). This phenomenological distinction leads us to consider Lowndes and Leach's three determinants of leadership styles to be insufficient to explain diversity. Furthermore, they are incapable of offering an acceptable clue on why styles change over time.

The framework presented in chapter IV establishes four main leadership styles: the *hierarchic*, the *fatalistic*, the *individualistic*, and the *egalitarian*, offers enough plurality to allow explanation for several other styles, and contributes to the understanding on how styles can change in the course of action.

### **5.2.2. Local Governance context**

#### *Local governance leadership*

Are leaders an “endangered species” subdued to “an appalling mortality rate” (Bennis, 1976: p.328)? In reviewing the history of the twentieth century, it would be impossible to portray its major events as only consequences of historical and particular forces, without assuming the important impact of political leaders. Researchers argue that leadership is decisive to governance - particularly at the local level - and that it needs powerful and creative figures that give the necessary direction to policymaking (John and Cole, 1999).

In fact, political leadership is one of the most relevant issues in local governance studies. Although the assumption that capable local leaders can greatly contribute to improve local governance, this has never been made clear enough, mostly it has not yet been explained how do someone has the will to act accordingly to a certain leadership style, more or less adequate to the desired effects in his local governance context. The numerous models of local political leadership that exist are essentially about structures and norms that shape the behaviour of mayors and their leadership style, offering the framework within which they select their courses of action, but do not determine them; and the result is in most of the cases a diversity of practices within the same institutional model. As Stone (2005) argues, these styles are also dependent on how leaders interpret their role and their context. Our main claim is that under certain circumstances the style of leadership of mayors can be a result of their intentions and possibilities resulting from their context perceptions and their sense of political autonomy and efficacy. This perspective indicates that the *political action* of the mayor discloses a particular *style of leadership* that, as we will try to explain, derives from his Political Will.

We offered a model of political leadership that results from Will, sensitive to external constraints, embedded in the context, and occurs in social interaction. Though we will use several terms, concepts and research from scholarship on local political leadership

– as it has been a prolific field on leadership style analysis – we suggest these may be common to leaders in other contexts and acting in other territorial scales.

*From government to governance (complexity and change)*

Two major trends – the shift from local government to local governance and the move to a new paradigm of public administration – are reshaping the context of local leadership. The first one puts an emphasis on partnership working and alliance building, recognizing that the government cannot work alone (Hambleton, 2005), and asks for rethinking the traditional models of leadership, since the top-down approach hardly works in partnership settings. The fundamental insight of the dominant political theory in the local field - regime theory - is that effective local governance is achieved through building cooperation in an everyday more complex network of power, institutions, boundaries, and private organizations (Stone 1989; Stoker 1995; Mossberger and Stoker 2001). To quote Stone (1989):

“if the conventional model of urban politics is one of social control . . . then the one proposed here might be called ‘the social-production model’. It is based on the question of how, in a world of limited and dispersed authority, actors work together across institutional lines to produce a capacity to govern and to bring about publicly significant results”.

Regime theory implies a new way of looking to leadership, not a top-down control over, but the structure of power that builds the cooperation through networks of different public and private agencies. It asks for leadership to be a more ‘expansive activity’ (Sweeting, 2002), with interactions between several local stakeholders. This shift from local government to local governance is having a strong impact in European countries (John, 2001) asking for mayors who are able to adopt an outward looking approach and to establish the necessary links to create the networks that are capable of answering the new challenges:

“Out goes the old hierarchical model of the city ‘boss’ determining policy for city council services and imposing it on the bureaucracy, and

in comes the facilitative leader reaching out to other stakeholders in efforts to influence decisions in other agencies that affect the local quality of life” (Hambleton, 2005).

The second trend puts democratic renewal high on the governance agenda, demanding new competences from local leaders in order to move around the necessary networks of delivery and deliberation (Stoker, 2006). Not only has local government evolved, but this has also put pressure on a new paradigm of public services: from New Public Management to Public Value Management (idem). This paradigm gives an extra emphasis on the needed solution for the ‘democratic dilemma’ (leadership versus citizenship) and explores several new roles for political leadership. Gerry Stoker asserts that Public Value Management in a local governance context – where “individual and public preferences are produced through a complex process of interaction, which involves deliberative reflection over inputs and opportunity costs” - needs leaders that “play an active role in steering networks of deliberation and delivery and maintain the overall capacity of the system” since the democratic process exists to deliver dialogue: “integral to all that is undertaken, a rolling and continuous process of democratic exchange is essential“ (idem). In fact, in parallel, there has been a significative change in the way public services are organized and are run.

#### *Political leadership as governing regimes*

Networked democracy sees governance in the sense of steering partnerships (Stoker, 2000), more than simple coalition-building. It is about intentionally created and oriented strategies. For its success “the only option open is to mix and match strategies in a never-ending attempt to provide the capacity to act” (Stoker, 2000: 94; Jessop, 2000). This approach has implications for political leadership. In fact, the democratic dilemma is ‘still alive’ and its tensions between leadership and citizen involvement exist. The needed complementarity – a ‘hybrid constellation’ as Haus (2006) calls it – is hard to implement and depends strongly on leaders’ styles. But leaders “are originals, not copies” (Bennis, 1989: 4), they emerge and are elected, therefore difficult to ‘create’. Warren Bennis argues that this is a difficult task since “more leaders have been made by accident, circumstances, sheer grit or will than have been made by all the leadership courses put together... Developing character and vision is the way leaders invent themselves” (Bennis, 1989: 42).

In fact, the processes by which they raise to top position are diverse and complex. Therefore it is difficult to ensure that the ‘best’ leaders are chosen and, even then, prepared to perform their tasks: “We can define their task but it is less easy to prepare them for it” (Elcock, 2000).

As Leach and Wilson (2000) argued, building on Kotter and Lawrence (1974), leadership behaviour is oriented towards a number of roles, which can be identified as *agenda setting*, *task accomplishment* and *network building and maintenance*. Leach and Lowndes (2007) divided this last role into four different elements: providing strategic policy direction, ensuring good performance, ensuring stable and supportive decision-making environment, using external networks to further the authority’s agenda. The first two roles – needed to build networks - related to setting the strategy and determine the policy, are performed by political leaders. As for the last two, managerial leaders are needed to ensure implementation and good performance. These two types of leadership are different, and as Warren Bennis stated, the difference between leaders and managers is “the difference between those who master the context and those who surrender to it” (1989, p.44). Kotter (1990) sees managers planning, organising and controlling while leaders focus on the change-oriented process of visioning, networking and building relationships. However, political leaders are not merely responsible for external relations and policy definition; they are also responsible for governing their institutions. These two roles – political and managerial – are not separated and local governments have developed complex and complementary roles as political leaders and professional administrators (Elcock 2001; Mouritzen and Svava 2002). Local political leaders “must pay almost equal attention to the two different tasks” (Berg, 2006): the creation of vision and the guidance in the day-to-day activities. This “interplay between leadership and management is vital in local government” (Hambleton, 2005).

As Greenstein (1987, ch.2) suggests, the personality of the leader is important, but only when he occupies a strategic position, the situation is unstable, there are no clear patterns on how to solve the problem, and an effortful behaviour is needed. In fact, this is the general description of modern local governance context.

The complementarity of leadership and community involvement is a positive answer to the ‘democratic dilemma’ (Dahl, 1994), possible through a “strong and more legitimised urban leadership [...] often seen as an important condition for increasing

effectiveness and efficiency as well for vitalising local democracy” (Getimis and Heinelt, 2004). In fact, both the work of Robert Dahl as well as of Edward Banfield have a strong influence on the topic of contemporary research on local political leadership, since their norm of consensus-oriented leadership advance an answer to this dilemma, protecting the local leaders from precarious situation, through overarching coalition in the locality, and maintaining his position in a system of dispersed power (Levine, 1980). Dahl’s ‘entrepreneur’ and Banfield’s ‘broker’ impersonate two variants of leadership in local governance that allow position protection and are oriented to effectiveness through complementarity between formal government bodies and citizens.

This movement from local *government* to local *governance* has profound implications in the role of the local political leaders, giving a new emphasis on their capacity to blend together resources, to bring communities together, to build networks and to understand a more complex reality in which to move. It is in this challenging new world that the local political leaders work. Borraz and John (2004) claim that “changing leadership patterns are strongly linked to the emergence of governance processes in the management of local public affairs in a form that is ‘path dependent’ rather than necessarily transformative”. This interpretation envisages their function as going beyond the tasks of service provision and embracing a concern towards the functioning of the community as a whole (Clarke and Stewart 1998). As Kettl argues, “public managers need to rely on interpersonal and inter-organizational processes as complements to - and sometimes as substitutes for - authority” (Kettl, 2002: 168).

This networked form of governance is an emerging style in several governing levels and in particular in municipalities across Europe. Sweeting (2002) shed light on this explaining that:

“local political leadership has moved on from an era when it involved heading a local political party, with the aim of controlling a local council which produced local services. Leadership in local government is now a more expansive activity, requiring leaders to interact with other local stakeholders ... to address matters of concern, whether or not they are directly within the realm of local government’s service responsibilities”.



The new local governance is asking for skilled social actors, capable of mobilizing cooperation among others - a definition of leadership that Borraz and John (2004) argue that is largely inspired by the work of Chester Barnard *Functions of the Executive* (1968 [1938]). In this governance context of interdependence and control over a complex network, organizational fragmentation, and multi-territorialisation, leaders are needed to persuade (Neustadt, 1976) and to guide regimes (Stone 1989). Thus, “the creative functions of leadership are an important dimension of their power” (Borraz and John, 2004).

An important part of literature on political leadership has tried to unveil which qualities are needed for an efficient leader. Hambleton and Bullock (1996) drew the picture for good local leadership, presenting six indicators: the capacity to articulate a clear vision, the promotion of the qualities of the arena, the capability to win resources, to develop partnerships, to address complex social issues and to maintain cohesion. These qualities are useful in order to the proficiency use of the tools / techniques needed for local governance, as identified by Stoker (2000): cultural persuasion, communication, monitoring, finance, and structural reform.

In 1973, Wendell Hulcher, a former mayor from of Ann Arbor, Michigan, published an interesting article entitled ‘Elected Local Leadership in Municipal Government’. His capacity to understand what the local government context was like is specially reflected on sentences like this: “for a local elected official, community leadership involves the ability to move community forces together and simultaneously toward a desirable objective”, hence, “emerging needs and desires of the people must always be recognized by local leadership” (Hulcher, 1973: 141).

Local political leadership is ultimately linked with problem solving as the heart of policy-making (Haus, 2006). Keywords as complexity and interdependence are relatively new to local government, and push political action much further than mere money spending, provision or service delivery. Also new social problems ask for the involvement of different organisations, apart from formal government, that require the capacity to foster collective action. The local power structures, referred by Clarence Stone (1980) and Elkin (1987), as the ones that put pressures on formal government and give rise to specific ‘regimes’, must be seen as the ones where local government operate within. And it is there

that local political leaders occupy a unique position with special power to intervene in these processes.

As Hockin (1977: ix) has noted, because an individual might have to choose to adapt its leadership style from one arena to another, its operational meaning would change depending on the context of his exercise. A definition would be restrictive and / or arbitrary. However we argue that if we look at leadership styles as a consequence of the Political Will of the leader, then the definition of political leadership is no longer a central and problematic issue, rather a lateral one. We assume that political leaders can make the difference and are totally free as individuals who can make their own choices, but they are constrained in the extent to which they feel able to act freely. Leadership is, therefore, “an interactive art in which the leader is ‘dancing’ with the context, the problem, the factions, and the objective” (Nye, 2008).

In accordance, Burns (1978) conceives leadership with three essential elements: it is a purposeful activity, it operates interactively with a body of followers, and it is a form of power (see also Stone, 1995). The determination, the objective focus and the free-will characteristics of the purposeful activity of J. Burns’s definition opens the path to our analysis of the role of Political Will.

#### *Local government in Portugal: focus on mayors*

In Portuguese local government the executive power is held by the executive council and, although collegiality is expected to be the rule that governs decision making, the mayor is the key actor in the local political system. His role is pivotal for the entire system – he controls the decision-making process and holds a number of essential political and administrative roles ascribed by law, such as: agenda setting, definition of policy priorities, implementation of decisions, organizational and personnel management, budget decision and control, representation, and relations with other local agents.

This mayor-centred system is also strengthened through overall majorities in the executive council, although the legal framework favours wide representation of different political parties. In fact in the last three municipal elections (2001, 2005, and 2009), in an average of 90% (88%, 91%, and 91%) of the executive councils there were political majorities supporting the mayor.

Poul Mouritzen and James Svava's comparative research on local leadership (2002) has clearly identified Portuguese system as a *strong-mayor form* (Mouritzen and Svava, 2002: 57-58):

“Most of the executive committees' authorities may be delegated to the mayor, who to an increasing extent (through legislation as well as local practices) has become de facto in charge of the municipal organization [...]. Because one party usually holds a majority, the typical Portuguese mayor is effectively in control of the political bodies” (idem: 58).

These authors provide information regarding different types of leadership in which strong-mayors engage. They are seen as strong *public leaders*, helping “to determine the direction that citizens want their city to take” (idem: 67); as designers in *policy leadership*, which mean they are “highly engaged in policy making with little attention to details” (idem: 68); as *proactive leaders*, rather than reactive ones, and more likely to be recognized as party leaders, although bringing moderate commitment to promoting their party interests (idem: 71).

Strong-mayor forms of local government also convey higher levels of ‘power distance’, defined by Hofstede as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, 1997: 28). As Mouritzen and Svava conclude: “generally, strong-mayor systems are found in countries where it is accepted that power is distributed unequally, where members are rule oriented and sceptical toward de political process” (Mouritzen and Svava, 2002: 75).

Furthermore, the role of Mayors in strong mayoral forms of local government is seen by municipalities' CEOs as being mainly to decide on major policy principles, create stability for the administration, and lay down rules and routines (idem: 176). In the Portuguese case its mayors are, comparatively, the most influential on budget decision making.

These characteristics would presuppose the existence of ideal conditions for few kinds of leadership styles, closer to the *hierarchist* leader we have presented before, and presenting similar styles across different municipalities. In fact, besides constitutional

‘catalysers’, which give mayors the legal framework to exercise strong power with high control over several policy instruments, also these favourable contextual conditions would presumably lead to a hierarchical way of exercising leadership. However, as we suggested before, it must not be exclusively due to *personal capabilities* that style diversity is explained. We claim Political Will to be the ‘responsible’ for political leadership styles.

### 5.2.3. Research questions

The challenges of local governance demand new answers from local government. However, how do mayors perform? What drives the mayor’s style of leadership? We advanced that a more open form of politics demands an adequate leadership style, which enables an effective governance arrangement, and that the Mayor’s Political Will has a positive influence on his leadership style.

Our argument is that leadership is important in democratic societies, particular in local governance context. Literature on democratic leadership reveals a common agreement (Weberian and Schumpeterian ‘classical vision’) on the fact that Political Will would produce a kind of messianic leader. However, as the nature of leadership is changing, several attempts to explore and capture different styles of leadership have been made. We acknowledge past research which considered context, constitutions, institutional environment, and capabilities to matter, but we claim that there is a need to expand the notion of Political Will, saying that it might produce other styles of leadership.

As the object of our research revealed itself to be a fertile soil of indefinitions, uncertainties and few agreements, and as we were going to present a relatively new approach, we chose to begin with a focus on existent scholarship and devote considerable attention to a theoretical consolidation of the arguments, which allowed more clear understanding of the concepts and their subsequent operationalization. Consequently, we reached some broad postulations which laid the foundations for our theory development process:

- (a) Political Leadership is the consequence of the agent’s capacity and possibility to exercise power over others and situations;
- (b) Action is the expression of a way to attain projected goals, and an attribute of the *homo agens*;

- (c) Political Will is an agent's intent to act through interpreted possibilities in order to change the public state of affairs.

These three statements lead to a number of propositions regarding Political Will and Leadership Styles:

1. Political Will 'exists' when the agent has the *intent* and the *possibility* to act;
2. *Intention* and *possibility* 'translate' simultaneously what the agent believes he *must do* and *can do*;
3. *Intention* and *possibility* reflect diverse but limited worldviews;
4. Political Leadership Styles result from the agent's Political Will;
5. Different combinations of the *expected* and *actual* worldviews result in different leadership styles;
6. Political leadership styles can change accordingly to several strategies which allow conformity or reflect reaction to worldviews.

Given these propositions, a main research question guided our research: *How does a political leader select and change his leadership style?* Several research sub-questions derive from the general one and are necessary to provide a more complete answer. First, how do political leaders understand their governance context challenges, and how do they respond to context changes? Second, how do political leaders understand their role and government's role? What drives their intention to act? How do they appraise their possibilities to implement policies?

In order to provide validity to our theoretical explanation of the role of Political Will in leadership style formation, we needed to conduct a research aimed at giving depth, information, clarity, evidence and eventual counterfactual arguments.

Our research hypotheses are, therefore, the following:

- a) *The Leader's Political Will is driven by the choice of means needed to attain desired goals.*

The process of *wanting* to achieve certain objectives only reflects the *will* of an individual if it becomes effective action, which expresses itself by the choice of the best strategy to attain them. This choice reveals the ‘content’ of the individual’s intent.

- b) *The Leader’s Political Will is driven by his perception about the formal conditions he has to engage in decision-making – a sense of being enabled to lead.*

Social dynamics and fragmentation put pressure on public authorities and constitute new challenges when policy efficacy is at stake. Although recent research has identified some styles of leadership as more adequate to overcome and tackle with this complex reality, it is important to understand how an elected leader develops these styles. For this reason, we will need to understand how does the leader sees his power structure inside his institution, his influence over the governance network and his political autonomy.

- c) *The Leader’s Political Will is driven by the perception of the efficacy of his decision implementation through complex governance networks – a sense of successful performance.*

How the leader is aware of his environment, if he feels capable of acting in a preferred manner and if performing that way his actions will produce the desirable effects, constitute the underlying basis for our third hypothesis.

- d) *Political Will constitutes a mediating factor between (X) constitutions, context and capabilities and (Y) the leader’s actions, and should be considered as a determinant of political leadership style.*

The answer to both questions (do they intend to act and how; and to what extent do they feel they can, being politically effective and having the needed means to do it), configures a portrait of what we have called *expected* and *actual* worldviews which mediate their constraints, determining the adopted style of leadership. And, finally,

- e) *Political Will can explain shifts in political leadership styles when incoherence between expected and actual worldviews is sensed by the leader.*

In order to explore these hypotheses, whose eventual empirical evidence will allow us to provide more depth and understanding on this phenomenon, we developed a research process designed to address its complexity.

### 5.3. Research design

The choice of methods must result from the broader ontological and epistemological issues mentioned above.

As we have produced a theory-based map of property spaces (see Ragin, 2000) of Political Leadership Styles, which resulted from an operationalization of Political Will, the next logical step is to provide depth and consistency to its assumptions. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett's (2005) *Case Studies and theory Development in the Social Sciences* offer relevant insights and coherence to this process. We identified the dimensions of Political Will that are deductively hypothesized to have the greatest causal weight and provided an apparently simple matrix of property spaces – although its inner complexity allow an acceptable identification with reality's empirical evidences. As argued by King, Keohane and Verba (1994), parsimony and simplicity are preferable, however they should be consistent with the phenomena one is studying, therefore introducing theoretical complexity when needed.

The reasons for a selection of a qualitative methodology are presented below and provide justification for the use of case studies. Afterwards we present which methods of data collection, namely interviews and documents, and how was conducted the process of sampling both cases and individuals. In order to acquire relevant information on how political leader envisage their choice of actions, both dimensions of Political Will were operationalized in accordance to the literature review and to the conceptual framework mentioned above. Finally, the process of explicitation of collected data and its analysis is also explained.

#### 5.3.1. Methodology

##### *Interpretation*

We offered a model of Political Will that is sensitive to institutional constraints, constitutional control, embedded in the context and generated in social interaction. However, separately defining and analysing the 'leader' and the 'context' is extremely limiting, and suggests that trait, contingency and situational approaches must be complemented by a *constitutive* perspective. It emphasizes the way in which both terms are interrelated (Denis *et al*, 2001), and claims that leaders may use different leadership styles accordingly to situations and to the particular group of followers they are addressing



(Sparrow and Liden, 1997). Leadership is, therefore, defined relationally (Leach *et al*, 2005), allowing space to explore the ways in which it is developed by the leader. This approach asks for alternative methodological paradigms and makes it harder to pursue exclusively quantitative methods (Morrell and Hartley, 2006: 493; Putnam and Fairhurst, 2001). Therefore, since political leadership involves relationships and interdependencies between leaders, followers, organizations, and context, an interpretative approach is useful, emphasizing the phenomenological stance which claims that the understanding of the individual and of the context are relationally configured (see Chapter III, particularly regarding the structure-agency debate).

As we aim at understanding Political Will and its role in leadership style formation, the opportunity of getting an ‘inside’ understanding of the individual’s definitions of his situation is central to the purpose of our inquiry. To say that human action has intentional content indicates that to understand its motives, means and aims one needs to unveil the system of meanings to which it belongs (Fay, 1996).

Mark Bevir and R.A.W Rhodes (2002) argue that an interpretative approach considers that “people act on their beliefs and preferences” (p. 132) and that these are not readable from objective facts. Additionally, as the authors explore the subjectivity as a premise of interpretation, they claim that “individuals can reason creatively in ways that are not fixed or limited by the social contexts or discourses in which they exist”, and, consequently, “adopt different beliefs and perform different actions against the background of the same social structure” (idem: 140).

However whether it is possible to attain understanding and how one does it through a process of interpretation of the agent’s intent is debatable. Dilthey’s *empathic identification*, or what Hirsch (1976) called *conservative hermeneutics* saw understanding as resulting from this close reproduction of the way the actor saw the events, as an act of psychological re-enactment. Geertz (1983) argued that it is actually an exercise of ‘looking over the shoulders of actors’ and trying to comprehend what they intend. On the other hand, the Wittgenstein’s *language* approach, especially from the work of Peter Winch (1970), sees language, like human action, as governed by rules, which provide meaning a set the contextual system where action occurs. Finally, *phenomenology* and *ethnomethodology*, mainly influenced by the work of Alfred Schütz, is concerned with figuring out how intersubjective meanings are constituted, “reconstruct[ing] the genesis of

the objective meanings of action in the intersubjective communication of individuals in the social life-world” (Outhwaite, 1975: 91).

All three approaches share common features (Schwandt, 2000:193): human action is seen as meaningful; “they evince an ethical commitment in the form of respect for and fidelity to the life-world”; and emphasize the contribution of subjectivity to knowledge. Therefore, they claim it is possible to understand subjective meanings of action – motivations, preferences, and aims – and, at the same time, doing so in an objective manner (as already argued by Schütz, 1962a). In order to understand the part – for instance, how a leader performs – the researcher need to get the ‘whole picture’ – the complex set of intentions, contexts, language, preferences, and so on (Schwandt, 2000: 193). And this relates to the notion of hermeneutics, and its ontological dimension inspired by the work of Martin Heidegger. It reminds us to consider individual’s standpoints, biases, prejudgements as relevant to understand their action; in fact, as Gadamer (1975) claims, understanding is interpretation. Every individual belongs to historically and socially inherited ‘traditions’ and ‘carries’ several prejudices and biases, and to try to get rid of them is to separate human beings from their own deeper condition.

As Schwandt summarizes, “understanding is participative, conversational, and dialogic, [...] something that is *produced* in that dialogue, not something *reproduced* by an interpreter through an analysis of that which he or she seeks to understand” (Schwandt, 2000: 195). This process – the work of the hermeneutist – “is not to develop a procedure of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place” (Gadamer, 1975: 263). We consider both our theoretical approach to the operationalization of Political Will through Grid-group Theory (seen as a heuristics), and our methodological strategy, to answer these epistemological stances.

### *Qualitative method*

The nature of interpretation emphasizes the value of qualitative data in pursuit of knowledge. This type of methodology is most adequate when the object of analysis relies heavily on understanding – particularly with an emphasis on meanings (Scott and Marshall, 2005) – and when the purpose is to understand people’s motives and preferences (Devine, 1995). It allows thick description of situations and agents, flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data is produced (Schwandt, 1994). As a matter of fact, the

underlying assumption is that by studying individuals in their contexts there is greater opportunity to understand their own activities.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) consider qualitative research to be:

“multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter [... and] studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use of a variety of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 2)

In debt with some of the precepts of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) we assume that individuals act accordingly to the meanings that things have for them, handled through an interpretative process and as a result of a process of interaction between people. As stated by Herbert Blumer, individuals “select, check, suspend, regroup and transform the meanings in the light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction of his action [... and] used and revised as instruments for the guidance and formation of action” (Blumer, 1969: 5). One could argue – alongside with a more structuralist approach – that individuals react to the same stimulus, sharing the same meanings, i.e. ‘traditions’ and ‘culture’, with similar results, and therefore causal relations are identifiable. Even if we agreed with this perspective – which we do not, as already explained – one must take into account the fact that individuals in leading positions (as the ones we are studying) can more easily ‘step outside’ the box of shared meanings. Their *positions* allow greater awareness of those meanings’ borders and provide them with the necessary tools (like those of political power, bureaucratic organization, and hierarchic authority) to cross them.

Following Bevir and Rhodes (2003) post-foundational approach to governance, we intend to stress the significance of meanings in shaping actions, particularly those of the local political leaders, aiming at the description of “the particular sets of reasons that led the relevant individual to act” (Bevir and Rhodes, quoted in Finlayson, 2004). We claim that human affairs are not understandable without grasping relevant meanings, allowing room for the agency of individuals to develop their own beliefs. Therefore, to study and understand Political Will as a determinant of leader’s actions, we need to provide depth

and nuance, letting the political leaders explain the meanings, beliefs and preferences, and providing the necessary authenticity that only arouses because the main characters – those who are deeply involved – are our main ‘research data providers’. We must rely on reports of events by participants, but, as far as possible, seek a variety of respondents and sources of information in order to obtain other ‘versions’ of the events, ensuring a confident degree of triangulation. We are not claiming epistemological indeterminacy or a form of relativism; rather we are working from a phenomenological perspective, incorporating interpretation, judgement and context without ceasing to work within the borders of political *science*.

One important attempt for the systematization of meanings and agency was undertaken by Brian Fay (1975). Accordingly to Fay, behaviour would not be possible without the actors’ understanding of what they are doing. The researcher interested in grasping interpretations should not focus exclusively on ideas and concepts, as he would overlook the importance of individual opinions and motives; and vice versa, those solely focused on agency tend to forget the relevant frame produced by shared meaning and beliefs.

Keith Dowding alerts for the “dangers in such an exclusively agent-centred approach” (Dowding, 2004: 137), as people tend to use justifications for actions produced in a retrospective way. However, as the same author recognizes, this does not mean that these processes of collecting data “should not be conducted, nor that their evidence should not be ‘trusted’” (idem: 138). The challenge is to discover the hidden truths behind political processes, actors and institutions. Therefore, even though a certain fact is not as real as it should be, but more of an actors’ interpretation of reality, it should be taken into account as real and important in understanding actions, as even myths and beliefs can motivate individuals (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003).

*Validity* and *reliability* in qualitative research need particular attention. First of all, “the extent to which a measurement procedures gives the correct answer” (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 19), one possible definition of *validity*, requires both matching the correct research methods to the subject of the research and use research techniques correctly: “intelligent fieldworker armed with a good theoretical orientation and good rapport over a long period of time is the best [validity] check we can make” (idem: 32). There are three strategies to improve validity: *triangulation* (Burgess, 1984: 144), *search for negative instances* (Seale,

1999: 38), and *member check* (Seale, 1999: 43). The first, also simply labelled as ‘diversification’, suggest that diverse sources of data, of theoretical approaches and methodologies, besides doing research with more than one researcher, can produce enhancements on validity check. The second way claims that the search for examples that disqualify previous hypothesis is particularly useful. This may be applicable for the general qualitative studies, but can find important difficulties in the case of interpretative approaches, particularly when using a single case method. The last procedure implies checking the researcher’s interpretations with the subjects of the research. Again, we find some limitations on this strategy since it can produce incentives for subjects to reject unexpected findings, and contribute for a second interpretation bias (Flick, 1998: 225).

Secondly, *reliability* as “the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whoever it is carried out” (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 19), concerns the replicability of a particular study (internal reliability) and of findings (external reliability) (Seale, 1999: 42). Contrary to natural sciences where replication of studies is a common procedure, in social sciences the assessment of reliability is usually based on the analysis of the researcher’s procedures. This ‘accountability’ of the researcher is possible if strong reasons are offered for carrying out research procedures in a particular way. In other words, there is a need to show one has acknowledged the subjectivity that is being brought to the research and that the necessary steps are taken to address its implications. Therefore, findings will be valid if they reflect phenomena adequately and will be reliable if successful replication can occur.

Conscious of these pitfalls, we look for validity through multiple methods in the research process. Triangulation was obtained through combining interviews and documentary sources (Eisenhardt, 1989), interviewing other actors besides those who are object of our research and using written material from field notes (Yin, 1989). Besides triangulation, cross cases comparison also contributed to fortify validation. Reliability is assured by our thick description of the research, its epistemological considerations and methodological aspects.

### **5.3.2. The use of case studies in theory development**

To operationalize the procedure described above, in order to assess the degree to which *intention* and *possibility* have an influence over Political Will and consequently on

political leadership styles, the research used a multiple case study design. As Yin (1989) points out, by examining a relatively small number of cases, and comparing and contrasting them, the researcher learns about significant features of the phenomenon and how it varies under different circumstances. And it can be quite revealing about the strength of a theory (George and Bennett, 2005: 250) providing evidence which may be considered more compelling and the overall study is regarded as more robust (Herriot and Firestone, 1983). Multi-site comparison contributes, also, to establish general propositions (Yanow *et al*, 2008). It can be argued that, in this case, comparison is a powerful conceptual mechanism, fixing attention upon the few attributes being compared (Stake, 1994).

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett define a case as “an instance of a class of events [...in reference] to a phenomenon of scientific interest [...] that the investigator chooses to study with the aim of developing theory” (George and Bennett, 2005: 17-18). Their definition of case studies methods includes both within-case analysis of single cases and comparisons of a small number of cases within a single research program (*idem*: 18).

George and Bennett go further on identifying case methods' strengths regarding theory development. They are useful due to their potential to achieve (George and Bennett, 2005: 22): (1) high conceptual validity, as researchers can measure the indicators being used and the relevance of variables against detailed considerations of contextual factors; (2) fostering new hypothesis, since the study of deviant events can produce relevant information to compare with the previous deductive theorizing process; (3) the exploration of causal mechanisms, which necessarily occur under specific conditions and their effects can only be understood if those interactions are interpreted; and (4) address causal complexity (see also Ragin, 1987).

For the study of leaders' intentions and constraints, case studies are particularly useful since it enables us to look into phenomena in context (Yin, 1989: 23). Regarding theory building, comparative case studies provide “natural experiments” (Yin, 1989) in which we can select our problems accordingly to the variables we want to consider. In this particular case, case study research design is commonly associated with the investigation of causal mechanisms, as the in-depth analysis of single units, or of a small *n*, through evidence-gathering provide the clues into what connects a alleged situation, event, motivation or preference to a particular event. For the study of these mechanisms, process-



tracing presents itself as fundamentally different from statistical analysis. It focuses on within-case processes and not on data correlation across cases, which presents important consequences for theory development: one single unexpected evidence can require significant alterations of the interpretation and, consequently, can contribute for theory revision or even refutation.

Case studies present also important advantages when the quest for new ‘understandings’ is at stake. Using Popper’s approach on “conjectures and refutations” (Popper, 1972), we can argue that scholarship has been almost exclusively focused in the latter. The former, usually seen as a matter of guesswork, is always a subject of methodological criticism. However, most of the significant work in science is the result of seminal work with this kind of characteristics. But, new ideas and new perspectives need to be subsequently subjected to rigorous analysis: a simultaneous strategy of *exploratory* and *confirmatory/disconfirmatory* research (Gerring, 2001). Case studies present natural advantages in this kind of theory development researches, particularly for developing typological theories:

“[T]hey help researchers opportunistically match up the types of case studies needed for alternative research designs and the extant cases that history provides. This helps to resolve the problem of case selection, one of the most challenging aspects of case study research designs. In addition, typological theories can guide researchers toward questions and research designs whose results will be pertinent to problems faced by policymakers” (George and Bennett, 2005: 7).

Adding the comparative dimension to case studies brings additional methodological requirements, particularly concerning research design. Comparison is treated as an approach where the researcher systematically explores similarities and differences based on previously determined expectations (usually as a consequence of theory-driven premises). This approach is particularly useful in addressing *diversity* (Ragin, 2000: 35-36). Taking a broader view of social phenomena, diversity-oriented research “tends to see social phenomena in terms of types and kinds and thus allow for middle-range generalizations – statements that refer to categories of social phenomena (Idem: 37).



Designing such research puts emphasis on the criteria for comparability. Its design must conciliate the research objective, the alternative designs and the actual real cases available. The different possibilities regarding typological theories include: differing cases in the same type, least similar cases, single crucial cases, and similar cases with different type outcome. We opted for the last one, where “exogenous variables can be ruled out as source of variation in the outcome [...] there is some basis for inferring that differences in the outcome can be attributed to the one variable in the typology on which the case differ” (George and Bennett, 2005: 252).

Comparative case study findings, particularly those concerned with interpreting single-actors perceptions and actions cannot be taken as representative of the political arena in general. However, they provide strong and broader lessons on human diversity, providing information to establish general propositions about human action and interactions (Yanow *et al*, 2008), with important information on the research questions, in order to obtain reliable propositions that can contribute to Political Will theory. Although our hypotheses were articulated in advance, they only served as guidance tools, since our research design was not directed to its systematic testing, which would require a large scale survey, but was suited to the refinement of theoretical propositions.

The problem of generalization is often pointed out by those who see general lessons drawn from single cases (or *small n* ones) to be inherently suspicious (Sjöberg *et al*, 1991). However, as Charles Ragin claims, its success depends on:

“(1) the number of relevant aspects of the case the researcher can encompass with his or her explanation, (2) the success of the researcher in showing that his or her portrait of the case actually makes sense of all the aspects that he or she has deemed theoretical relevant, and (3) the agreement of other scholars that all relevant aspects of the case in question have, in fact, been addressed by the researcher in a convincing manner” (Ragin, 2000: 69).

Using a *small n analysis* presents some advantages regarding theory building (George and Bennett, 2005). It provides the opportunity for extensive dialogue between theory and data, offers depth of knowledge and allows process tracing. In fact, when thick

description is needed – as the subject of our research requires – a limited number of cases is recommended.

Although our reduced number of case studies and the interpretivist approach could lead to a non-generalizability critique, we argue that it can establish the existence of a particular phenomenon (Van Maanen, 1988) generalizable to theoretical propositions (Yin, 1989) and adequate to the main purpose of exploratory research and theory building on Political Will and Leadership Styles. In fact, as George and Bennett claim:

“Case studies are much stronger at identifying the scope conditions of theories and assessing arguments about causal necessity or sufficiency in particular cases than they are at estimating the generalized causal effects or causal weight of variables across a range of cases, [...] remain[ing] much stronger at assessing *whether* and *how* a variable mattered to the outcome than at assessing *how much* it mattered” (George and Bennett, 2005: 25).

The use of case studies is often associated with the intent of identifying the conditions under which specific outcomes arise, and particularly the mechanisms through which they occur, rather than discovering their frequency.

What to compare constitutes one of the most relevant questions in case-studies research. In order to provide insight on our main questions regarding how leaders adopt a particular style of action, we considered that controlling external differentiating variables would be a relevant option. This kind of *most similar* case-studies selection, demanded a way of assuring context stability – the local governance setting – in order to focus research on the ‘effects’ of leaders motivations for action.

We used case studies as *plausibility probes* (Lijphart, 1971; Eckstein, 1975) to determine whether our theoretical claims had sufficient support from reality or if it should be object of adjustments. This type of case-studies is applicable when “there is a proto-theory that the researcher wants to try out” (Peters, 1998: 150). To consider our research programme a preliminary study is not intended to lower the standards of evidence, but it recognizes the fact that we are using an untested theory. George and Bennett add a ‘new’ kind of theory-building case studies (2005: 76): *building-block studies*; which are mostly seen as tests for theories, particularly in order to identify causal mechanisms.

Predominantly useful in developing typological theories (idem: 111), both approaches to case studies inspired our research programme, where different cases with a high level of manipulable independent variables were chosen in order to trace its association with different types (resulting from our typology).

Although looking at all the types in a typology can be addressed by logical truth tables and Boolean algebra (Ragin, 1987), we considered that, given the theory development aims and its seminal stage, it would be more useful to provide more consistency and strength to its claims, rather than immediately offer a complete and exhaustive testing of the complete typology. In fact, more than its consequences regarding the extensive work it would represent, that kind of approach would not be useful for theory development (idem: 82-83).

### 5.3.3. Sampling: cases and respondents

The process of selecting cases for research is a relevant part of a “good strategy to achieve well-defined objectives of the study” (George and Bennett, 2005: 83).

Regarding the process of choosing which municipalities for the case studies, we acknowledged Vivien Lowndes and Steve Leach’s (2004) research which culminated on an article entitled “Understanding Local Political Leadership: Constitutions, Contexts and Capabilities”. As mentioned before, this study claimed the possibility of explaining political leadership styles at the local level by recognizing disparate setting of constitutional arrangements, contextual conditions and personal competences. Our main argument – as explained in previous chapters – does not exclude this possibility, but introduces the need to consider individual action as based on intentional dimensions. Therefore, we considered Political Will as a mediating factor between *contexts*, *constitutions* and *capabilities*, and *observed behaviour*. *Intention* would rely on personal motives and preferences to attain desired goals and *possibility* would be dependent on the leader’s interpretation of his opportunities to act accordingly (see chapter III).

Therefore, in order to provide a case setting which allowed focusing the research on leader’s Political Will, our main task was to identify similar conditions in which the variability of Lowndes and Leach’s three explanatory dimensions would be analogous. Although impossible to assess capabilities prior to conducting the case-studies, it would be feasible to avoid wide variation of the other two dimensions. Therefore, since the

*constitution* variable is – by definition – already controlled in the Portuguese case, since the same formal rules and laws apply to all local authorities, one of the main aims was to try to control the context complexity variable.

In order to provide similarity, we have decided to focus on municipality population. First, 31 out of the 308 Portuguese municipalities were selected (the decimile around the municipal population average), and other decimiles were established around the average of several variables (activity rate; percentage of resident population; unemployment rate; variation ratio of resident population from 1991 to 2001; social diversity ratio; illiteracy rate; and proportion of resident population that works or studies in other municipality). We rated all the first 31 municipalities from 0 to 3 accordingly to their correspondence to each of the latter variables (0 = only on the population decimile; 1 = population decimile and other variable decimile; 2 = population decimile and two other variables decimiles; 3 = population decimile and three other variables decimiles). All the municipalities rated with “0” were excluded, and only 17 were selected – those that, by this method, are the most similar accordingly to a range of variables of context complexity.

Our final array reflected Portuguese local government’s national composition and characteristics: from a geographical perspective (40% *coastal* municipalities / 60% *interior* municipalities; 60% from the *center* of Portugal / 17% from the *north* / 23% from the *south*); and from a party membership approach (47% with a *social democrat* mayor / 29% with a *socialist* mayor / 17% with a *communist* mayor / 6% with a *coalition* mayor). These 17 municipalities constituted our ‘available’ universe in order to select those where we could conduct the case studies. This was highly dependent on mayors’ ease of access, of understanding and general agreement towards the research intentions. The final five were the result of these constraints.

It will not be claimed that the selected municipalities constitute a representative sample. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to ensure that the main contextual variables are controlled in order to assess differences on perceptions, as we intended to use the ‘most similar’ municipalities.

Respondents were selected accordingly to the principle of phenomenon dictating the type of participants and not vice-versa (Hycner, 1999: 156). The Mayors, as primary participants, are those “who have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Kruger, 1988: 150). The authorization for case studies and interviews – by

informed consent (Arksey and Knight, 1999) – was given by these key participants. In order to trace additional informants for the purpose of triangulation, a snowball method of expanding the sample was used (Crabtree and Miller, 1992), by asking the main interviewees to recommend others for interviewing. The access to these ‘key insiders’ (Bailey, 1996) may contribute to isolate the researcher from potential informants and provide bias to the study. However, as for research purposes we were seeking for key informants with privileged access to the main object of analysis – the Mayor – it would be almost impossible to expand this sample beyond the borders of a limited number of members of close staff. In fact, the role of the snowballing was merely to gain authorization and access from the ‘gatekeepers’ (Bailey, 1996).

The use of informed consent ensured ethical research. This can often lead the interviewees to beforehand gain access to the content of the research, which would contribute to an eventual bias. However, in order to avoid this, the central research question was not provided, an option not regarded as deception (Kvale, 1996). The agreement clearly stated: that interviewees were participating in research, with a general purpose of studying leadership (with no reference to the leading question); the procedures to be followed; its voluntary nature; and how confidentiality was protected whenever the interviewee asked for it, or when the researcher considered it to be advisable. This consent was fully explained at the beginning of each interview, and all required additional information was answered, providing honesty coupled with confidentiality, which in Bailey’s (1996) words reduces suspicion and promotes sincerity in responses.

#### **5.3.4. Data collection and interviews**

A case-study protocol was developed in order to guide data collection from cases and, therefore, increasing *reliability* (Yin, 1989: 67). We followed Robert Yin’s (1989: 67-77) guidelines to build it accordingly to four sections: (a) case-study project overview; (b) field procedures; (c) case study questions, and (d) guide for report. These sections have afterwards developed onto the content of the present chapter.

The distinctive features of the situations we are analysing require methods which allow in depth information, concentrating on individual beliefs, motivations and interests. Interviews provide relevant information on attitudes, preferences, feelings, and respondent’s understandings of their situation. From Yin’s (idem: 85-97) six sources of

evidence we have chosen Interviews and Documentation as they allow targeted and insightful information and, at the same time, stable and unobtrusive data. Documents were used to corroborate and augment evidence from interview sources. The diversity of sources contributed to *validation* through *data source and methods triangulation* (idem: 98-99), which has been increased through the use several documentary types and sources and through conducting two groups of interviews in each case.

Every phenomenon can be experienced and understood in a considerable number of qualitatively different ways, or in Schütz's words "the human world comprises various provinces of meaning" (quoted in Vanderberg, 1997: 7) and the researcher's focus should turn "toward the ways in which ordinary members of society attend to their everyday life" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2000: 488). Our research task was aimed at describing this different ways of understanding, in order to provide relevant information towards the identification of the characteristics of both dimensions of Political Will.

In order to gain insight into respondents world-views, interviews allow researchers with relevant information (Fielding, 1993). For phenomenological purposes, interviews present some advantages: it is "a means for exploring and gathering of narratives (or stories) of lived experiences" (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007: 619); it develops conversational relationship about the meanings of those experiences; and, it allows sharing stories in participant's own words (ibidem). Two rounds of interviews (around five months apart) were conducted with the mayors of the five municipalities and their main staff members. In the first set we were interviewing about the ways of experiencing phenomena by the mayors – Political Will – and assessing their strategies of action – style of leadership; while the second was aimed at triangulating data with other's insights on mayor's will and style.

In addition to the interviews with mayors, we conducted group based discussion interviews with their staff members. In these cases, the key feature is "to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Van Willigen, 2002: 148).

Both mayors and the staff focus groups were asked a pre-established set of questions derived from the case-study protocol, however with a high range of open-ended questions, which corresponded to a *focused interview* type (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1990). The interview guide included different kinds of questions (Kvale, 1996), although



some of them followed a more loose format and were just topics to help guiding through the process: (a) introducing questions, aimed at the general picture of the mayor's intentions and possibilities' assessment; (b) follow-up questions, non written but used in order to get the interviewee to provide more information; (c) probing and (d) specifying questions, most of them not written, since it depended on the course of the interview; (e) direct questions, which result from the operationalization of the research variables; and (f) interpreting questions, which allowed mayors to elaborate on previous answers providing extra information or validating the researchers interpretation.

For this reason, and because phenomenological approaches are intended to capture "rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings" (Kensit, 2000: 104), the researcher must encourage an open-ended dialogue and allow the data to emerge (Groenewald, 2004: 11), which may lead to unforeseen answers, including new or contradictory perspectives on the research question. Therefore, the interview questions were necessarily open-ended and differentiated from those of the research (Kvale, 1996). These were "directed to the participant's experiences, feelings, beliefs and convictions about the theme in question" (Welman and Kruger, 1999: 196).

All interviews were audio-recorded and assigned a code (ex. MunC-M-080709, which meant Municipality "C", interview with mayor, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2008). Transcription and first notes – a preliminary analysis – were done few days after the interview, in order to maintain vivid some of the non-recorded 'fresh' insights, and to prepare the subsequent interviews with staff members.

The collect of documents for analysis followed four criteria: (a) authenticity, if it is genuine with recognized authorship; (b) credibility, identifying its accuracy and if it is a reliable source of event's description; (c) representativeness, whether the document is typical of its genre and if it gives more, or at least similar information, when compared to others; (d) and meaning, its comprehensibility and its relevance to the context within which it was produced (Scott, 1990). These documents were, mostly, interviews given by the mayors to local media, official public reports signed by the mayor, and some political speeches. These were also coded (ex. MunA-DR2-ud, which meant Municipality "A", document type report number 2, with date unknown).

Field notes are another important data source in qualitative research (Lofland and Lofland, 1999). As suggested by Minichiello *et al* (1995), it enables the reconstruction of



conversations in context rather than relying on context-free analysis of recorded interviews. Recording researcher's experiences contributes to the following analysis of the collected data, and is already "a step toward data analysis" (Morgan, 1997: 57). This was a disciplined effort that took place before each interview (while waiting and describing how the appointment procedure was done, how long was it taking, how was the setting, and so on), during the interview (mainly describing non verbal behaviours), and immediately afterwards. The notes recorded what was happening as comprehensively as possible and without judgmental evaluations. Besides these observational notes, some methodological ones were also taken as reminders and instructions regarding the process. Filed notes codes used a similar format as other sources (ex. MunC-FN-080709).

Each case-study data-file included the consent agreement, the field-notes, the transcription of each interviews, additional information provided by the participants and the relevant documents collected.

Evidently, all interviews were conducted in Portuguese, and were subsequently translated into English in order to analyse its content. As some of the particularities of the idiom and of the context could have been in risk through this process, we kept a Portuguese version of all documents while analysing them in order to have the possibility to confirm and better understand these eventual idiosyncrasies. All interviews with mayors took almost two hours, while with the groups of staff members it was done in less than one hour.

Although anonymity of the respondents and of cases was initially not intended, and authorization was given to identify information on every subsequent published material, we decided not to do it since the relevance of personal information related to publicly know individuals could endanger the validity of the analysis. Therefore, all names and data which could provide information related to personal identification were codified.

### **5.3.5. Operationalization and questions**

We have previously operationalized both dimensions of Political Will using Grid-group Theory. Created by Mary Douglas and developed by Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky (1990) – later referred to as Cultural Theory - it argues that it is possible to systematize group or organizational cultures as an answer to two basic social dimensions: its degree of hierarquization and of social cohesion. First developed in cultural

anthropology has since been applied throughout the social sciences. Wildavsky (1994) argues that it helps to explain how persons derive their answers to basic questions like: how does my context work? How do I hold people accountable to me? Answers to these questions produce basic orientations towards two dimensions: external prescriptions and rules (grid) and the strength of affiliation with others (group). It explains how relations' preferences are formed as consequence of different grid and group positions. It has been argued its importance to better understand institutions (Wildavsky, 1987), new institutionalism (Grendstad and Selle, 1995), citizenship (Denters and Geurts, 1999), political ideology (Coughlin and Lockhart, 1998), political change (Lockhart, 1999), and policy analysis (Hoppe, 2002). Regarding our paper's main theme it is also significative that Ellis and Wildavsky (1989) used grid-group theory to discuss the 'Dilemmas of Presidential Leadership'; Gerry Stoker (2000) did the same when studying British local governance and Hood (1998) applied it to public administration. Aaron Wildavsky (1989) developed also a Cultural Theory of Leadership, but approached this theme using Grid-Group theory as a regime descriptor claiming that particular contexts are more capable of explaining certain styles of leadership. Our approach is rather different, since we used this theory to comprehend how leaders understand their context.

We believe that Grid-group theory helps to disclose the mind of the leader. The questions for the interviews with mayors tried to capture their causal drivers in their political relations, making an effort to unveil their perceptions of internal and external constraints. If the leader feels apart or belonging to a larger community, and if the world is tractable or not have different consequences. Therefore, the contribution of Grid-Group Theory is that of the explanation of how the leader "sees" the world and his actions. We claim it helps understanding mayors' Political Will, and it clears out the distinction between leadership and Political Will.

This analytical framework provides a useful tool to understand individuals "positions" towards their environment. Denters and Geurts (1999) explain that Grid-Group Theory "pretends to bridge the gap between individual preferences and the social structure". It can illuminate many of the fundamental analytic questions of 'political will', as it captures much of the variety in individual attitudes and perspectives about how life is circumscribed by conventions and rules (grid) and the extent to which individual choice is constrained by group belonging (Hood, 1998).

Wildavsky (1987: 5) argues that preferences “constitute the very internal essence, the quintessence of politics” and Grid-Group Theory allows us to understand preference formation. It offers an overall framework to our operationalization of Political Will dimensions, and it is used as starting point rather than a final answer to our research questions.

However, finding ways of measuring ‘Grid’ and ‘Group’ is a complex matter. Mary Douglas points out that in each study “the investigator will need to use ethnographic judgement just as much as in research design” (in Gross and Rayner, 1985: xxvi). Additionally there are very few examples of the use of indicators of Grid-group dimension in scholarship. One of those few was developed by Steve Rayner and Jonathan Gross (1985), associating Group to the extent to which individuals interact with others within a network, and measuring Grid through the differentiation within the network.

In the first case, Group is translated into (idem: 73-79):

- (a) *proximity*, as the closeness of members – the extent to which each individual interacts with all the others;
- (b) *transitivity*, as the probability of two interacting members interact independently with other members;
- (c) *frequency*, as the proportion of time spent within networks;
- (d) *scope*, as the extent to which interaction inside a group unit overlaps with activity outside the unit;
- (e) and *impermeability*, the probability of non-members attaining membership.

Regarding ‘Grid’, the predicates are (idem: 79-82):

- (a) *specialization*, as the number of roles an individual assumes;
- (b) *asymmetry*, as the extent to which role exchanges are similar in terms of power;
- (c) *entitlement*, as a way of differentiating if roles are achieved or ascribed;
- (d) *accountability*, as the sanctionability of role performance, since it presumes categorical distinctions;

- (e) and *standardization*, as the extent to which behaviour is formalized or prescribed.

Hampton (1982) and Mars (1982) also suggest operational definitions of Grid and Group, which follow similar paths: Group measures included interactions, mutuality, scope and boundaries; while Grid was assessed through autonomy, control, insulation and competition.

When suggesting the operationalization of Political Will's dimensions – *intention* and *possibility* – through Grid-group typology we followed the available scholarship and adapted it accordingly to the context of political leadership. In fact, rather than addressing them directly, we followed our conceptual framework on the causal segments of political leadership styles and used relevant information related to the leader's expression of context awareness, sense of autonomy and of political efficacy to disclose both dimensions. Therefore, its operationalization was conducted indirectly, which presented some advantages, particularly as it avoided eventual biases that would result from the direct questioning of the *grid* and *group* indicators. Additionally, the scholarship on the predicates of *grid* and *group*, besides scarce, is more adequate from a positivist epistemological approach as it offers variable's measurement, rather than an interpretative perspective on the role of meanings. Getting respondents to provide information on how they 'see their world and their actions' in terms of context, position and efficacy, revealed to be extremely helpful in making *grid* and *group* 'available' to the researcher.

Besides general questions regarding the Mayors' attributed meanings of success, main tasks and roles, which would help disclosing *intention*, our interview protocol included a set of questions aimed at better understanding their sense of being able to lead, in order to assess *possibility*. We were particularly interested in focusing on issues of constitutional powers and local authorities' competencies, influence capacity, attention on followers, and resources available at the local authority (financial, technical, and human). A second set of questions aimed at the Mayors' sense of successful performance. We focused on issues of personal capabilities (those needed and present), histories of past action with successful and unsuccessful consequences, governance context description, and their perception about norms that rule social arrangements.

Therefore, in order to assess *intention*, we seek “I must” statements about roles, choice, moral purposes, objectives and preferences. This inner dimension is, as expected, extremely complex but exposable through interviewing, specifically when asking what the role of local government is and that of the mayor, and what does he understand to be his success. Regarding *possibility*, all the “I can” statements – as perceptions of resources, context and opportunities – were considered in order to assess this second dimension of Political Will.

Both *intention* and *possibility* can be assessed in terms of Grid-group’s typology. Its separate assessment is only possible since both dimensions bear two – apparently – very different epistemological approaches to human action: the first as the result of a pre-disposition to act and an evaluation of its consequences, and the second as an interpretation of the conditions to act (a complex set of beliefs and perceptions). So, besides the attainment of a general characterization of the Mayor’s perceptions about his context, his sense of autonomy and political efficacy, our interview protocol also allowed to depict *intention* and *possibility* in Grid-group Theory’s terms.

The Mayors were also asked to describe a “normal” procedure for their decision-making process and policy implementation. This ‘short-story description’ allowed us to obtain other relevant information. In fact, in Schütz analysis, both the pursued end and the means chosen to get there are familiar to the agent, and his willingness to achieve a particular goal through a certain path follows previous experiences and emerges from past actions (the *because-motives*).

A final set of questions were prepared in order to get the characterization of the Mayor’s leadership style. Different styles comprise a profound diversity regarding resources and strategies used by mayors. We operationalized these styles distinguishing between formal and informal resources (Sweeting, 2002), and also explaining which different strategies (cf. Stoker, 2000), roles and rules were at stake, aiming at several features descriptions: profile, legitimacy, authority; control over policy making, budgeting and patronage; meetings conduction, goals and budgets decisions; communication, administrative reforms, authority, and policy implementation and monitoring. The following set of interviews with close collaborators (staff members, local public servants and deputy mayors) used similar, but adapted questions.

The Case Study Protocol we developed was mainly centred on the guidelines for these interviews, which – as abovementioned – were built around open-ended questions<sup>3</sup>, and corresponded mostly to a researcher’s check-list<sup>4</sup> of themes to address during the meeting. These were introduced using always ‘how-questions’, in order to elucidate and provide depth on the answers to the open-ended questions. In fact, as claimed by Becker (1998, 68-60), the use of ‘why questions’ can produce defensive behaviour on the informant. In contrast, posing ‘how questions’ allows the researcher to satisfy the needs of inquiry, creating the same opportunity to have ‘nonthreatening’ access to the informant’s ‘motives’. This apparently loose strategy relied on a clear understanding of what issues to address, which were replicated in every interview, and was significantly supported by the researcher’s previous professional experience in the local government’s political field.

The questions we addressed were not *if* each Mayor had the *intention* or if he had the *possibility* to act, which would just tell us if he had Political Will or not, but *what* were his intentions and *how* was it possible to act. The answers to both broader questions allowed the characterization of the two dimensions of Political Will in terms of Grid-group Typology and permitted to explore the mechanisms that explained its relations with the observed leadership styles.

### 5.3.6. Data explication

Although phenomenologists tend to be reluctant to prescribe techniques (Holloway, 1997, Hycner, 1999: 143), “since that would do a great injustice to the integrity of that phenomenon” (idem: 144), some guidelines are necessary. Based on Hycner (1999), a data analysis method has been identified in order to provide the best means for this type of study.

We adapted Hycner’s (1999) explication process, which implies an “investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole” (idem: 161), and suggest four steps:

<sup>3</sup> Guiding questions of the Case Study Protocol for interviews with Mayors included: (Q1) What are your tasks as a Mayor? (Q2) What constitutes your success as a Mayor? (Q3) What contributes the most for that success? (Q4) What prevents you from attaining success? (Q5) What is your role in contributing for the future of the municipality?

<sup>4</sup> Check-list of issues to address: (I1) Values for action and motivations; (I2) Powers given by law; (I3) Municipal social diversity; (I4) Governance context characterization; (I5) Relationship with citizens and local authority’s personnel; (I6) Influences and other pressure groups; (I7) History of success and of failure

- 1) phenomenological reduction: this term was coined by Husserl and implies a purposeful expurgation of the researcher's meanings and interpretations, "in a sense that in its regard no position is taken either for or against" (Lauer, 1958: 49). This 'bracketing out' – *epoche* – of personal views and preconceptions demands the researcher to become familiar with the words of the interviewee. A deeper understanding of the meaning of the experiences of individuals in their lifeworld is sought (Smith, 1997), which "occurs through increasingly deeper and layered reflection by the use of rich descriptive language" (Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007: 616);
- 2) units of meaning identification: the second step is done through delineating all units of meaning and deciding which ones are relevant to the research questions asked (Tesch, 1990). It is in this critical phase that those statements that shed light on the research phenomena are isolated, and eventual redundancy is eliminated; in this step, coding allows to reduce a considerable amount of data into smaller units;
- 3) clustering: clusters of meanings are formed by grouping the units of analysis (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994) that share common essences of meaning and relate to the research questions. Hycner (1999) remarks that this step calls for the judgement and skill competencies of the researcher.
- 4) theme extraction: themes development result from the previous steps, where the clusters of meanings are grouped together and further elaborated in their relation with the theoretical stances and hypothesis previously presented. This continuous movement backward and forward between collected data, analysis, earlier deductions and theory correspond to the basic assumption of the hermeneutic circle (Bontekoe, 1996).

The product of a phenomenological research should be as simple as possible, such that those who experience the phenomenon may recognize their own reality with the identified themes (St. Pierre, 1997). In our research we used a systematic method of



thematic data analysis (Hayes, 2000), which is aimed at identifying the individual's interpretations.

First, interviews' transcripts, documents, and field notes were read and re-read in order to provide familiarity with the entire body of data. This took place immediately after the interviews – or as immediate as transcriptions allowed it. Then, for the identification of 'units of meaning' we used 'open coding', developing and modifying codes as we worked through the process, although preliminary codes resulted already from the first step (for instance, 'reluctance to admit inefficacy'). The 'bracketing' process and the hermeneutical circle, particularly the permanent focus on what were the research questions, do not demand that every single piece of text is coded, rather those that constitute relevant units of meaning for understanding the phenomenon (for instance, what are the characteristics that describe the context of governance for a specific Mayor). After this step, the identification of themes occurred when units of meaning (coded) were identified as 'fitting together' (for instance, and using the previous example, 'reactions to governance context'). Themes should be coherent, make sense and should not overlap. Therefore, the final step must contribute to identify the relationship between themes and eventual causal mechanisms, and confirm if they are valid accordingly to the data initially collected, if confirmed or not through triangulating with other sources, and if they contribute to the clarification of the initial research question. In conformity, we coincide with the claim that "in determining the universal or essential quality of a theme our concern is to discover aspects or qualities that make a phenomenon what it is and without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (van Manen, 1997: 107). Thus, theme extraction concludes this method.

Because of the applied focus of our work, and the plausibility probe intention of conducting these case studies, we did not use any computer aided programmes – although extremely helpful when compared to 'traditional' analysis. Furthermore, those instruments would face significant difficulties, particularly as we were dealing with two different languages at the same time. As argued by Coffey and Atkinson, "there is no one software package that will do the analysis in itself" (1996: 169). In addition, the understanding of meanings "cannot be computerized because it is not an algorithmic process" (Kelle, 1995: 3). Thomas Groenewald agrees with this perspective and goes a bit further claiming that "these programs do not help with doing phenomenology" (Groenewald, 2004:20).

In the next chapter, as we present and discuss the data from each case-study, light is also shed on this method, however there is not much more detail given about how the analysis was conducted, since its purpose is mainly to present its final stage and trying to offer plausible answers to our research questions. The research findings of the case-studies are, therefore, exclusively focused on the thematic and theoretical aspects of this thesis and not on its methodological aspects, though some considerations and limitations will be addressed afterwards.



## CHAPTER VI – PORTUGUESE MAYORS: CASE STUDIES, MAIN FINDINGS AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

*A description of the verification of a proposition  
is a contribution to its grammar.*  
Ludwig Wittgenstein

### 6.1 Portuguese local governance

#### *Context and history*

The municipalisation of the territory is one of the most important medieval heritages as, since the end of the Middle Ages, all continental Portugal has been divided in councils (Monteiro, 1996). In fact, the universalisation of the council as an administrative and judicial territorial unit is identified since the end of the XV century. In the beginning of the XVI century (1527-1532), when the first attempt to census the population was done, 762 councils were identified. This number grew and stabilized for three centuries, until the first half of the 1830's, when constitutional liberal monarchy took place in Portugal, and the modern state was built. The *Portuguese liberalism* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reorganized the chaos of the administrative dispersion of the *Ancien Régime*, creating a centralized local administration, heavily controlled by the national level, with a bureaucratic system of local agents appointed by the state (Oliveira, 1995). It was during this period that Portugal witnessed the decrease of the number of municipalities (from 856 in 1837, to 290 in 1898). Since the beginning of the republican regime in 1910 until now, its number became almost constant. At the moment, the 308 municipalities represent more than one century of borders stability with roots that can be traced back to the medieval legacy. More recently, although some few local movements have asked to become independent municipalities their purposes weren't accepted.

The first democratic local elections, mediated by political parties, occurred in December of 1976, after almost half a century of mayors being appointed by the central government during the dictatorship. But, at the end of the 1970's, Portugal was still a highly centralized country. The new Constitution (1976) recognized the municipalities as autonomous elected bodies, even though with no substantial administrative or financial powers, and with political and administrative powers still heavily concentrated and

centralized. In fact, still nowadays, local administration jobs in Portugal represent 18% of total public administration and, nevertheless, have grown 12,6% since 1999 (DGAL, 2006).

Although the Portuguese governance is apparently simple to understand, as it has only two formal levels of governance (national and local), its complex legal framework makes it hard to manage. At the municipal level, each council is divided in civil parishes (*freguesias*) with their own elected bodies, but with few responsibilities. Regional coordination commissions, and regional departments, appointed by the government, establish a quasi-regional governance level, although its tasks are attached mainly to some few areas of national governance, for decentralized coordination. This complexity is also visible when we look at its dense legal framework. In Portugal, all aspects of local governance and municipal responsibilities are regulated by different laws: the framework within which the reassignment of powers towards the local authorities is regulated; the rules for administrating the municipalities; the system of human resources management; and the control over financial resources.

But local governance in Portugal is changing, not only due to the same general factors common to western European countries (John, 2001), but also, and mainly, as a consequence of a reshaping of the distribution of responsibilities at different governance levels and to predictable future devolution strategies. In Portuguese history, the strengthening of local governments has been an important issue since the establishment of democracy. Recent enactment (and expected ones in a near future) provided devolution of responsibilities to municipalities, mostly regarding social equipment, education, work and solidarity, health care, internal administration and urbanisation. However, accomplishing decentralisation and reinforcing local governments' powers is still dependent on a profound change of its financial framework (Pereira, 1991).

During these last few years there has been a strong pressure falling upon local government in Portugal that seems to have been accelerated by several factors. Limited in action, but still able to react to this shift to governance, municipalities are adapting and adjusting to new forms of governance. There has been an accelerated growth of the local corporate public sector - approximately 85% of the municipalities invested in public and private corporations. This attempt to establish public-private partnerships to improve

municipal management, and to develop new forms of governance, was only possible after the Municipal, Intermunicipal and Regional Corporations Act of 1998.

#### *Main responsibilities and tasks*

Under the Constitution, the municipalities have a set of general tasks assigned for matters of purely local interest, legally defined as: management of physical assets and property, land purchase; town planning; sewerage, water, gas and electric supplies; education and culture (pre-school and primary school equipments, museums, libraries, theatres); sports facilities; natural parks, recreational areas; rural and urban facilities, such as roads, fairs, markets, and cemeteries; public transportation; fire prevention and control; subsidised housing; health care.

The municipal executive runs the municipalities on a daily bases presenting proposals to the municipal assembly, which has ultimate responsibility for the approval of the most important matters, such as the annual plan and report, the budget and accounts; personnel framework and local taxes. The extent of responsibilities shared with the *freguesias* fluctuate according to case-to-case agreements, and can encompass local development, sanitation, water treatment, healthcare, education, culture, and environment protection, as well as specific responsibilities in the fields of property management, culture, assistance, rural and urban equipment. These 4,252 civil parishes have specific responsibilities related to the management of their own assets. Also according to the Constitution, two or more municipalities may form voluntary associations in order to carry out tasks of common interest and to use common technical, human and financial resources.

Local elected representatives operate in an increasingly complex legal, financial and technical context, put together by the 1979 Local Finances Act (revised over the years), which regulated the financial framework of the municipalities. The resources of local authorities are reinforced with a Financial Equalisation Fund created to reduce local inequalities between municipalities. The access to the European Regional Development Funds was a key factor in mobilizing the political will for an institutional reform. This Fund required a far-reaching change since it was necessary to have a coherent regional development policy, with appropriate institutional structures to implement it. An overcentralized country would not be able to conduct a process that required local involvement. Therefore, in the 1980s, the Government ordered the definition of a regional

development policy for the country, with regional priorities and instruments. A process of political reform began, aiming at turning local authorities into legitimate development agents and giving the legislative, technical and financial autonomy needed to carry out their new local responsibilities. Three types of changes were made to the operational framework of the – then – 305 Portuguese municipalities: in terms of political responsibilities municipalities were allowed to make various types of local investment; in terms of technical responsibilities the government decided to create technical support offices throughout the country to assist the municipalities in performing these tasks; in terms of funding, a new local finance law obliged the government to transfer resources to the municipalities each year.

The delegation of new powers to local government included the opportunity to organise and develop their interests in a supra-municipal perspective, with mutual economies of scale. It seeks to provide for public service delivery that meets the growing demands of the local communities at the lowest costs possible, strengthening the capacity to cope with the increasingly complex environment, at the same time leaving the policy domain of local government intact. In fact, there is no permanent transfer or loss power or competencies, preventing local democracy from being hollowed out.

Local governance constraints in Portugal are pushing forward municipalities to a more decentralized administration, multilevel and networked governance, aiming at new strategies of citizens' engagement, changing traditional representation mechanisms and reshaping institutional procedures, searching for more effective and efficient public services.

## **6.2. Case studies**

For the study of Political Will and Political Leadership Styles in context five case studies were selected. They provided natural experiments for the investigation of its causal mechanisms through the gathering of evidence. The focus on within-case processes and its cross-case coherence can disclose relevant information for the intended theory development, fulfilling their task as *plausibility probes*. The conjectures – to use Popperian terminology – we presented in previous chapters were delivered through theory deduction based on logical propositions and sustained on existing scholarship. The comparative



approach allows the exploration of similarities based on the previously determined expectations that can, afterwards, be refined.

The following analysis of the data we collected will be presented case by case and, at the end of this chapter, the cross-case communalities and its contribution for theory development will be discussed.

Unsurprisingly, much of the richness of each case study, particularly as a result of several hours of interviews and of a considerable number of documents, is translated into a simple and short presentation of few themes and some complementary quotes. A systematic method of thematic analysis in phenomenological research would, predictably, result in a process of theme's *explicitation* that seems, afterwards, as extremely simplistic and, sometimes, crude. However, what will follow is just the digest of a complex, intricate and rich process of analysis.

The themes that were identified are common to all the five case studies, and constitute a *first level* approach to the systematic analysis. Thus, each case will be presented as a sequence of different themes, and afterwards – on a section entitled 'grid-group dynamics' – *second level* themes are presented and discussed. We will quote extensively from our data material to allow other readers to assess our interpretation of what was said or written.

The first two *first level themes* (Origin of Action and Phantasying of Action) were grouped on a *second level* analysis as constituting the theme "Stipulated World". "Allowers" of Action and Context's Nature constitute the *second level theme* "Actual World". All the other themes (Strategies of Action, Perspectives on Positional Resources, Preferred Attitudes, and Style Dissonance) were grouped under another *second level theme*: "Style of Leadership".

The tertiary analysis of these themes will contribute to the understanding of our general theoretical assumptions and will allow its refinement. Additionally, after presenting all the case-studies analysis, this systematic thematic analysis will also allow delivering a more confident and logical verification of the validity of our working hypothesis. This will be presented at the end of this chapter.

We decided to report three of the cases studies with more detail, particularly presenting all the *first level* thematic analysis, while for the last two cases only the examination of *grid-group dynamics* is presented. This avoids extensive and repeated

information, while keeping intact its implications for our research objectives. This was mainly a practical decision that pragmatically contributed to avoid long descriptions of the systematic thematic analysis that was undertaken.

### **6.2.1. An egalitarian through hierarchies (the facilitator)**

#### *The leader's context*

The Mayor of Municipality A presented itself as *terra incognita* for the researcher. In fact, although the geographical proximity and a relatively informed knowledge of the territory, there was no previous information related to the Mayor.

Municipality A has more than 28 thousand inhabitants and is situated on the central-northern coast of the country. This mostly industrial municipality, with a public image of a polluted region overcrowded with factories, presents also a relevant rural area, crossed by several water canals. This municipality has seven civil parishes (*freguesias*).

Regarding its party politics context, four members of the executive board were elected on a coalition list (social democrats and popular party) and support the leader, with only two members representing the opposition (socialist party), as a result of an appointment to office through 65% of the votes. One year after the interview with this Mayor, local elections delivered a similar result – 64% in 2009 – which represented a consistent growth since he was first elected in 2001 with 47% of the votes. This same majority has 58% of the seats in the Municipal Assembly. Until 2001 the local executive was lead by a socialist.

Mayor A, 48 years old, is a former lawyer who was invited to join a party list campaigning for the local executive and has been the mayor of this municipality for 7 years (at the time of the interview). Before this first appointment, he was an elected member of the local executive, although on the opposition's bench. Nowadays, he leads a coalition of two parties that usually join forces together within the local elections field.

The arrangements for the case study were done together with his personal secretary one month before the interview with the Mayor. This was conducted at his office in town hall, and took place 50 minutes after schedule, since – as we were told – he was holding a meeting with staff. While waiting, no references to the Mayor were found, not even in the magazines available at the waiting room. The Mayor's office was full of dossiers,

particularly on a large table – where we sat at for the interview – conveying “a sense of lot of work” (MunA-FN-090802).

No real physical barrier existed between the participant and the interviewer as he “opted to do it at the working table and not behind his desk” (MunA-FN-090802). After a brief clarification of the proceedings and the consent letter reading, the Mayor quickly accepted the terms of the interview and the broader case study arrangements, without further questions. The interview finished after 70 minutes.

### *Thematic analysis*

#### Origin of intention

This first theme condensed statements of personal dispositions and of projected goals of the Mayor’s actions. He was particularly clear and objective when he presented where his original intentions were grounded:

“I was a leader of many civic organizations before working as a politician. I thought – and was invited to do it – that if I was seeing the game from the public’s perspective, why not join the game and enter the field as a player?” (MunA-M-080702)

As a grassroots’ associations experienced leader the opportunity to produce more powerful changes by getting elected to office presented itself as an interesting prospect. However, this was not a straightforward decision:

“There was initially a psychological barrier! I was already very close to the political field. And worked a lot for my community. We worked together.[...] This was my perspective about things. And I had a profound knowledge of our local history, and of our community, and that influenced my options” (MunA-M-080702).

“He was not easy to convince. Apparently there was no real interest on this job” (MunA-FG-081124).

Meanwhile a decision was taken:

“But thought: go and manage the condominium, it is also yours. And I said yes” (MunA-M-080702).

“I believe he sensed this job as a kind of continuum. It was closely connected with what he was doing before. Just from a different point of view” (MunA-FG-081124).

Mayor A repeatedly states that he had specific motives for accepting the candidacy, particularly depicting an idealized vision of the municipality and how it should work in the future: what he called his *condominium*. His objectives were clearly stated since the beginning:

“My first campaign was entitled «unite and act». The success is [attained through] joining people together, avoiding hostilities and work together” [...] I always say I’m a kind of condominium administrator. And people must know this, and come to the meetings of this large condominium, and take their part on the decision process [...], even influence the administrator. Or else, politicians need to guess their opinion, which is not a good thing – normally” (MunA-M-080702).

He synthesises his willingness to act as a consequence of a context assessment:

“The state of affairs does not please me. That impels me to move” (MunA-M-080702).

#### Phantasying of action

The interview with MayorA provided unambiguous evidence – later confirmed by other sources – on the way he imagined how things worked as a responsible for local government. His projected strategy of action and assumptions on the exercise of power included:

“The exercise of power must not be arrogant, conceited, it must be a kind of conveyer of influence, and also being determined but involving people: motivated and joined together” (MunA-M-080702).

“I imagined things were like that [...]: I was just changing my job, everything else was the same [...] and we would continue to work as a united community” (MunA-D1).

“The first days in office were particularly interesting to observe. We were all learning, but he saw his power as no different from ours or others” (MunA-FG-081124).

The way this interviewee envisaged his action conveys a particularly strong sense of group membership and cohesion, with a protective approach to membership and a relevant sense of belonging. Expressions like ‘unity’, ‘group’, ‘together’ are constantly referred during the interview and are recurrent in documents.

### “Allowers” of action

This theme gathered all units of meaning that referred to the Mayor’s sensed possibility of action. In other words, it expresses all the references to his sense of autonomy and of political efficacy.

Mayor A emphasizes with particular vigour the accountability dimension of his work:

“Opinion makes me think, and... as an example... imagine I want to build a road somewhere and the people say they do not want it there, even though I explain it would benefit them. Then, ok! Let’s spend money in other things” (MunA-M-080702).

And this close relation with citizen’s opinion is also determinant when evaluating past experiences:

“Past experiences normally give us the strength of persistence. When we know that that is the way. Of course that there are things we have done and did not work. So we change the strategy, although we keep our values, the fundamental philosophy” (MunA-M-080702).

“Mostly, I think I learn and adapt from listening to the assessment others do of my work. The community building I’m asked to deliver depends on the people, so that is why one needs to change opinions when it is the community that is at stake” (MunA-D2).

This constant assessment of the opinion of citizens can be seen as a constraint for the Mayor’s action, but it is, at the same time, a relevant source of ‘reasons’ for action, and mostly – when consent is attained – an important resource that allows efficiency in policy making.

On the other hand, resources availability and constitutional rules are seen as a problem:

“The mayor needs more constitutional powers. There is no money available. The image of mayors is not the best one, as people’s perceptions about us are very bad” (MunA-M-080702).

Rather than feeling constrained by these problems, Mayor A accepts them. It is important to consider the fact that this was the only reference to lack of resources found in the interview, and in the other materials. Actually, given his strategy and projected goals, this Mayor considers his resources as being enough to attain them. If the objective was to

be a strong leader of the municipality he might have been obliged to consider himself as heavily constrained. However, with a focus on community building and collective answers to common problems, those are not considered as relevant:

“I would like to have the necessary means, capacity and time to do everything I want, but... nevertheless, local government and the mayor have a strong mobilizing capacity. We just need to focalize people on those areas. We have the human resources, then we identify the strategic partners, those who can help, and do it. I set the objective!” (MunA-M-080702).

In fact, he accentuates the fact that:

“Facing the context and the situation of public administrations I think I have revealed efficacy. I would like to be a little more. But I must say I have the autonomy to catch the opportunities.” (MunA-M-080702)

“I’m not completely free, there are many restrictions and bureaucracies, but I’m independent. I can introduce change. We can do it together.” (MunA-D1)

And this perspective on how he can overcome difficulties and seize the right opportunities provides a sense of being allowed to act:

“There are a set of rules and traditions of governance that are constraining, and – of course – personal values that are fundamental. But the capacity to overcome and change is really important. My role as Mayor is relevant for the future of the municipality. If not, I would not be here. It must be relevant.” (MunA-D1)

“Although there are several difficulties, I must tackle them and overcome some barriers. My will determines that success.” (MunA-M-080702)

#### Context’s nature

Rather than continuing to consider his context through the eyes of a leader of a local association, which transmitted him the perception of security and stability as being attainable through collective work and group belonging, as a Mayor he considers that:

“The context of governance is very complex; we are all different; but it is also very challenging. In fact, the practice is to try and find common issues and concerns. And even give incentives to this process.” (MunA-M-080702)

More than facing differences, or group dissonances, Mayor A considers his role to be guided by the goal of providing equilibriums.

“[Need to] assure the consistency of an organization that is a subject of new pressures, from political opposition, distrust of local public servants, with other organizations, in the centre of pressures, interests (implicit or explicit, strong or

weak). The task is to find equilibriums, also with our personal preferences, but restricted by procedural and budgetary constraints.” (MunA-D2)

### Strategies of action

In accordance to the metaphor used by this Mayor to explain how he saw the municipality – the ‘condominium’ – the strategies of action regarding persuasion, communication and decision-making stress the role of partnerships, community and group bonding.

“But what tools did we use? We asked: where do we need to intervene? For instance, in schools, we are responsible for the buildings. So we spend some money improving their quality. Then we demanded the same commitment from other partners (the central government, the teachers, and parents, all...).” (MunA-M-080702)

“We need partners, engaged, in order to attain success. Citizen’s engagement is important, and has different roles: incentive, corrective, support, and sometimes is just an expression of particular interests. Everything is possible. A politician without the capacity to understand people – setting aside the hostiles from other parties and the adulators, which must be filtered – will be incapable of connect to its territory. Listening to people is not loosing time: they are the real world. This is also my role.” (MunA-D3)

The role of the public in local government’s policy and decision-making can originate rearrangements and reorganization of previously stipulated strategies.

“Sometimes this redirection of concrete options based on the non-willing of some people has happened”. (MunA-M-080702)

However, it is for the local executive to provide the necessary guidance to the network of agents. Although it would be expectable to find references to a more group based and collaborative strategies, the leading role is clearly ascribed to those who are elected. However, leadership is not seen as an act of providing for everything, but a way of building partnerships around common goals:

“The local government leads this process”. (MunA-FG-081124)

“We identified a priority and provided them with that priority. We need to stimulate that: force the discussion, and call people to these projects.” (MunA-M-080702)

### Perspectives on positional resources

Legitimacy is seen as a consequence of being elected to office, which gives the Mayor the authority to lead the municipality. Although this perspective would seem apparently irrelevant, given the fact that it is merely a statement of the source of



democratic legitimacy, one must stress the fact that Mayor A considers it to be repeatedly reinforced throughout his term of office.

“The citizens gave me support through the elections. That is the ‘legitimacy fountain’. And listening to them continues to be a good poll: they know I’m here, and have a positive way of thinking about the future”. (MunA-D2)

His positional resources result not only from the repeated process of legitimation achieved through a close relation with the public and being particularly sensible to their opinion, but also as a result of his personality and profile.

“My profile is important also. The mayor is the guy behind it. Determination is very important. Giving the example is very important.” (MunA-M-080702)  
“It works because he can do it. He is able to relate with people, to listen to them. He is one of them and acts like that.” (MunA-FG-081124)

#### Preferred attitudes

The objective of attaining low levels of inner group differentiation is deliverable by a kind of institutionalization of equality, or, at least, as Mayor A claims, by providing the necessary opportunities for conciliation.

“Everything influences us. However one must deliver a kind of moderation of equity, equilibrium of interests, particularly when they are conflicting.” (MunA-M-080702)

This appeasement has two sides: the first as a contribution for the intended group cohesion building; the second, as a process of legitimation. Attitudes related to these objectives include a continuous effort of listening to people’s intents.

“I like to hear everybody. Different opinions help, as it gives a notion of our work and the value of our work, as a function of what we feel. However, I also say: a serious politician should not have ears. And this is also a way of protecting oneself.” (MunA-M-080702)

However, as this Mayor promptly understood, he is expected to deliver guidance and strategy to the group. Being a permanent listener is not being a ‘doer’ – as a leader is expected to be. Foreseeing and bringing strategy to the course of municipal action is also needed.

“We also need, sometimes, to be a kind of prophets – you do not understand why that road is there, but you will in the future. It is the capacity to persist and be correct before the time.” (MunA-M-080702)

### Style dissonance

Mayor A’s projection of his expected role and his confrontation with the actual means available to do it are revealed through statements of surprise and through the description of ‘action shifts’.

“I saw things from the eye of the non-politician. And it was the same as being a member of an association. I could get things done as I always did. But things were different. One needs to act differently in order to attain the same objectives”. (MunA-D2)

“It did not work if I let things go. They would not understand each other. I delivered common goals. It was easier if I assumed a particular position. And I was not prepared for this sort of things.” (MunA-M-080702)

As presented before, the need to change the course of action is frequently referred by this mayor, particularly as a consequence of divergent public opinion or through people’s engagement in participatory processes. These ‘action shifts’ revealed an important dissonance between the mayor’s original intention – with an accompanying coherent style of leadership – and his factual performance.

### *Grid-group dynamics*

This case study provided an interesting example of dissonance between expected and actual worlds. This *heuristic* conflict, as we previously expected, had important consequences on Mayor A’s style of leadership.

First, both his original personal dispositions and projected goals of action, and, at the same time, the coherent projected strategy to attain them through a set of assumptions he had on the exercise of power, constituted a clear description of a “Stipulated World” wherein a sense of strongly bounded group with low levels of social hierarchy leads us to consider it as typically *egalitarian*.

“I think I’m an individual amongst other individuals. Of course! But we all belong to a large group. And this is the only way we can deliver development to the municipality”. (MunA-M-080702)

As stated before (Chapter IV), the *egalitarian's ephemeral nature* tends to stimulate group cohesion in order to avoid risk and discourages trial and error. To prevent it one needs to hold the collective together. Benign change would result from the bottom-up collective action – which can, in this particular case, result from the Mayor's previous experience as a grassroots associations' leader. Presenting himself as a good interpreter of the group's intentions would be the proper way of acting and of gaining authority.

However, his "Actual World" presented itself as being rather different, especially from the responsiveness to incentives side. As Mayor A said during the interview: "I became conscious of the need to provide patterns of action and to set common goals" (MunA-M-080702). His sense of autonomy and of political efficacy was delivered through the assumption of his authority as the best solution for social stability and a way to offer context certainty. This *hierarchical* viewpoint, apparently not shared by the interviewee, but resulting from other's expectation about his performance, asked him to have a top-down approach to the exercise of leadership.

"I must say it was a hard surprise for me to see that in order to be successful I needed to provide stronger leadership" (MunA-M-080702). This statement is one of this Mayor's most relevant ones, as it clearly conveys several of the theoretically expected behaviours. Not only he expressed surprises between his "stipulated" and "actual" worlds, but he also explained that these are understandable as the need to provide guidance. Recalling our leadership styles framework, this is the most uncomfortable situation for an egalitarian: recognizing that individual differentiation and hierarchies are the ones that are expected to work.

Although this *surprise* could lead to a *hierarchical* style of leadership we found relevant elements to consider that a different strategy was used. Mayor A is quite clear about this 'not completely hierarchical' approach:

"The exercise of power is – sometimes – an exercise of solitude. We listen listen listen, and then when is time to decide, we must be alone. But I spend most of my time with people, seeing, listening..." (MunA-M-080702)

Although recognizing his differentiated role as a leader and as a decision-taker, he still gets back to the safe boundaries of the group, and his leadership strategy is its coherent consequence:

“After facing reality one needs to find a solution. One could answer: I have a solution, so you must follow my mind. But that is not the answer: the answer is to join people together, discuss (involving them through a strategic plan)... building communities.”  
(MunA-M-080702)

Therefore, rather than a Change Migration Strategy – from *egalitarian* to *hierarchist* – we must consider that his leadership style resulted from Influence. This case sets the example of the leader persuaded to act differently after an assessment of his *possibilities* of action. Mayor A considered he would act with more efficacy if he adopted a *facilitative* style of leadership. He tried to keep – and even reinforce – the horizontal integration of the members of the group (municipality), and saw his role as a distinctive one: as delivering goals and guidance to the network of local agents.

### **6.2.2. A hierarchist in command**

#### *The leader's context*

The fame of being determined and an ‘accomplisher’ had long preceded Mayor B. This was the only preconceived image we had before visiting Municipality B. It has more than 37 thousand inhabitants and it is located in the centre of Portugal. It is mostly dominated by an extensive rural area, with some relevant industries, particularly on the distribution sector, given its strategic proximity to the main Portuguese highways. This municipality has 17 civil parishes (*freguesias*).

Four members of the executive board were elected on the socialist party list and support the leader (himself a member of the party), with only two members representing the opposition (one from the social democrats and the other from the communists), as a result from an appointment to office through 53% of the votes. This margin was slightly enlarged in 2009 (after the case study) by 1%. Mayor B was first elected in 1993 (39%), and has since saw his electoral turnout justify an enlarging majority. The same socialist majority won 47% of the seats in the Municipal Assembly. Until 1993 the local executive was lead by a social democrat.

This former accountant with 53 years old, has been the mayor of this municipality for 15 years (at the time of the interview), and had no previous political activities. He now leads a safe majority, both in the executive board and in the municipal assembly.

The arrangements for the case study were done with a member of his close staff few months before the interview with the Mayor, and revealed some interesting

particularities, namely the fact that the researcher was invited to take part in a weekly lunch the Mayor has with his closest staff and deputy mayors before heading for town hall in order to conduct the interview. This allowed an embedded experience in a different context of the one of formal interviews.

With an “expansive style, very dominant in the discussions, often avoiding different opinions, and speaking more loudly than others, he showed impish humour” (MunB-FN1-080704). The waiters at the restaurant were treated as ‘servants’. The lunch, mostly dominated by informal talk, finished with a cigar and whisky. It had just few moments to talk about work with his staff, but mostly analysing political situation at the local and regional level, and making some impolite comments about party colleagues and other mayors. After paying for everything and while leaving the restaurant he remarked: “I don’t like to see my photo all over the town. You will not find any” – with a clearly false modesty.

During the car trip, heading for town hall he mentioned: “all you see here is my work” (MunB-FN1-080704); “[t]here is an after [Mayor B], and a before [Mayor B]” (MunB-FG-081022), assured one of the staff members (as if the same culture crossed all the organization). He pointed out some roundabouts, roads, and a public library, revealing vast skills for political communication and public relations (MunB-FN1-080704).

The interview was conducted at his office in town hall, and took place after lunch, as scheduled. He tried to convey a sense of unwillingness to answer the questions since, as he had previously demonstrated “he is a man with nothing to say, just to show” (MunB-FN1-080704).

The Mayor’s office is particularly small and without many documents at sight. He sat at his desk and offered me a chair at a large table – six feet apart. The interview was conducted while preparing his personal computer for later use, and some email reading. We were often interrupted by his personal secretary to sign some papers – he tried to convey the image of a very busy Mayor, with many things to do. The interview finished after 50 minutes. Mayor B answered all questions, often saying “this is the truth... I do not like to lie... I’m very direct and frontal”.

*Thematic analysis*  
Origin of intention

Mayor B's personal dispositions and projected goals were particularly obvious and constituted a recurrent theme during the interview (MunB-FN1-080704) and in the available documents. The argument for the need of economical development through public investments is a repeatedly used by this Mayor, with an important focus on local the role of government role in enhancing citizens' quality of life and in expanding job creation.

“Municipalities need mayors to have initiative: to do investments.” (MunB-D1)  
“There is an important condition behind all of this. When I was elected as Mayor I understood that anyone in this public role must work in order to promote the quality of life of their citizens. [...] And how do I do it? [...] create jobs; create better conditions for citizenship; roads, gardens, avenues, schools, cultural equipments.” (MunB-M-080704)

These objectives seem to have a relevant role on the Mayor's perception of his motivational thrust. It worked as a 'trigger' for the path he wanted to follow as a leader of this Municipality.

“My motivation is my intuition for a strategy for the municipality, and I am evaluated by that. The objective is to create wealth for the municipality. [...] When I started here I received people at my office saying they were unemployed, without food to eat, and I was left here crying.” (MunB-M-080704)  
“I called my staff and said: we expected to build a new town hall, but - in fact – we need to create jobs. During my first years in office I reversed the trend and created jobs, and that is what explains more votes. I'm not saying the fault is of my predecessors, but it was a national trend they were unable to reverse.” (MunB-M-080704)

This clear identification of his “origins of intention” ultimately would result in an ‘intuition’ on how the goals would be achieved, and therefore clearly stating which strategy of action would be more adequate.

Phantasying of action

His prior assumptions about the role of the Mayor were of someone capable of producing change and particularly able of promoting public investment. The leader of a local government should be able to have at his display enough resources that will enable him to attain such goals, or else he would not be a good enough leader to implement the needed policies.

“Imagine that I was a Mayor and it was impossible for me to have the opportunity to build public equipments: I wouldn’t be a Mayor!” (MunB-M-080704)

A coherent strategy of action relies almost solely on his opinions – one could say on his ‘hunch’. And with a self-centred strategy such as this, difficultly someone else, individual or institution, would have enough capacity to influence or persuade the Mayor:

“What influences me the most is the intuition of what is better for the city, and for the municipality. Not the people, the party, the executive, the government, but the intuition. However, it is important to listen to those who tell us things with sincerity. Because I know when some are saying I’m the greatest, but in fact they are saying: «go f#### yourself».” (MunB-M-080704)

The necessary means to attain the projected goals of Mayor B were considered to be available and at hand since the beginning of his mandate – and even before (as a preconception of what were the powers associated to this kind of public role).

#### “Allowers” of action

It is particularly evident the way Mayor B attaches his goals with his own way of acting. In other words, he considers his actions to be ‘filled’ with efficacy. The resources available and the way governance works contribute to this *fiat*.

“In parallel we need to create employment. Everyone must admit that since I’m here more jobs were created in the municipality, by the private investments we attracted.” (MunB-M-080704)

“The fact is that I love this. We were capable because we had the human resources capacity to do this. And when we did not have them I employed them.” (MunB-M-080704)

Not only the resources and general rules of governance give him a sense of autonomy in order to attain the desired goals through the – considered – adequate actions, but also his own capabilities and powers are considered as enough and the most adequate.

“My competencies and the local government’s competencies are enough. I have the ‘presidential’ powers that are needed to do this. I can approve – alone – thousands of Euros, without waiting for the executive board’s approval. This is a way of conciliating urgency with efficacy”. (MunB-M-080704)

“I have efficacy. When I think of a project I can do it”. (MunB-D1)

“He actually does what he has in mind”. (MunB-FG-080704)



Regarding the sense of autonomy, as we have set before, accountability is expected to play a particular role in its formation, since close ties with followers can have two kinds of effects: it can be seen as restraining or as a catalyser. Mayor B, although assuming strong social ties within his municipality, faces the public as a confirmatory and positive incentive.

“During the first years as Mayor I had no difficulties: had a good relation with everyone. But when our public investments started to appear (avenues, roads, gardens... only gardens I did ten, TEN! – and I can show you all), I received letters, people saying: the Municipality is changing, ‘You are a great Mayor’.” (MunB-M-080704)

“And the opinion of people matters. It matters in terms of votes. Until 1994 no one was elected with a voting majority over hundreds votes... I won my first election by 88 votes, the second one by five thousand, the third with 4500, and now seven thousands.” (MunB-M-080704)

#### Context’s nature

An informative description of how different agents work and of what are their motivations provides relevant data concerning the way Mayor B considers the nature of his governance context to be.

“We must lead. Businesses are self-focused and when we do a partnership with a particular business, we risk hearing that there must be something for the Mayor to win with the partnership. Why that business and not the other? I need to defend myself. I have no partnerships.” (MunB-M-080704)

Group boundaries seem to be particularly relevant in his way of ‘seeing’ the world, where group commitment is attained through the performance of local government – providing clear patterns of actions.

#### Strategies of action

A paternalistic role of local government, as well of his Mayor, is coherent with the previous theme’s analysis. When asked what his role is, the answer confirms this perspective:

“[To] make everyone and everything work! To know if deputy mayors are doing their work, if staff is doing their work, and particularly – and I have that role personally ascribed to me – the public infrastructures department is very important. It must be always working. [...] Must be doing things, planning new ones, finding money for them.” (MunB-M-080704)

The meeting we witnessed at lunch reinforced this interpretation of the Mayor's style of action since the themes selected for debate were introduced exclusively by him and the following discussions were efficiently dominated by his opinions (MunB-FN1-080704).

“What you have seen today happens every day, with my deputy mayors. [...] To discuss things, to work, to do brainstorming...” (MunB-M-080704)

Inputs given by others are not irrelevant, although the Mayor's opinion prevails, as he admits:

“Imagine: when I want to do an important investment, I call my executive, the representatives of the *freguesias* – almost all from the socialist party – and ask for opinions. I have my own. I must be sincere: sometimes they say no, but I know it must be done. [...] A decision against it is very rare, because it is so evident. This is how I've done so many public investments.” (MunB-M-080704)

“When I want to do a swimming pool I call the technicians. When I want to rebuild the municipal theatre I called a friend of the secretary of state and he suggested a name: and here he is working with me. And so on.” (MunB-M-080704)

And this is a consequence of centralized decision making:

“Municipal budget is almost all a consequence of my inputs.” (MunB-M-080704)

“When we do a mistake, next time we need to think more and more. And it stays with us...” (MunB-D3)

“Being able to appoint people is fundamental to manage the municipality. I appoint people after hearing my deputy mayors, but it is often a case of intuition. I must say that in 15 years I only made one mistake.” (MunB-M-080704)

This strategy is assured by maintaining strong ties with local agents, providing them with the necessary means to guarantee their support and their consonance with the policy decisions taken by Mayor B.

“Partnerships with local associations and subsidizing them is fundamental. It is very important to support them, since they are like small “lungs” of the society. I must not stop this practice of subsidizing.” (MunB-M-080704)

#### Perspectives on positional resources

Authority is an important resource for Mayor B. Although recognizing his role to be better performed through group cohesion and consensus building, there are particular characteristics of the individual occupying the office of Mayor that give him the authority and the power over others and situations.

“I do not ignore I’m a member of a larger executive. I did not do this alone. However, regarding those big investments I told you about, I always had unanimity. No one has the courage to say no: when I say that I have a project and have enough co-funding, they have no choice. I offer the project and the way to do it. [...] And for the general population, the same. They accept it.” (MunB-M-080704)

This source of authority is also armoured by strong confidence in his profile. The adequacy of Mayor B’s personal ‘style’ (different from the style of leadership we are assessing, and referring to the way he manages social relations) is sufficient to guarantee motivation, consensus and power maintenance. His past experiences of success as a consensual leader also reinforce this perspective.

“People’s motivation results from my style. If they like, they believe in me. If not... I must tell you something, and it is true: since I was first elected the leader of my class (in the third grade) I never lost one election. [...] I was president of a local sporting club for twelve years and no one resigned. [...] I’m Mayor for 15 years, and no one has resigned since then.” (MunB-M-080704)

Furthermore, the campaign slogan he used in the 2009 local elections gives a clear and coherent picture of this perspective: “The power of willing” (which can also be translated as the ‘power of *will*’) (MunB-FN2-091122). It unveils his confidence on his profile:

“The profile of any leader is relevant. Authority derives from my style. [...] Today a said to a colleague Mayor: “go f#### yourself”... and everyone understood me. It is my style. It is very important to know me. [...] When my staff sees I’m worried they try to help me. I’m sincere and spontaneous. There is nothing hidden between me and my staff.” (MunB-M-080704)

### Preferred attitudes

This theme results from the interview units that refer to the subject’s perspectives on power delegation and his attitudes towards problem solving. In the case of Mayor B, the best way to characterize him is through the concept of centralization and personal involvement:

“Success is the joy and fulfilment of seeing the work done. [...] To do a road the communists didn’t want me to do; to see swimming pools, markets, sports equipments, library... A mayor must be a ‘doer’. [...] If he isn’t, he still is a Mayor; however he is a manager of continuities... a manager of day-to-day things. He needs to get involved and make things happen.” (MunB-M-080704)

The distinction between the Mayor who is an achiever and the one who is a ‘manager of continuities’, and linking the ideal leader with the first one is a relevant descriptor of Mayor B’s preferred leadership style.

#### Style dissonance

There is no identifiable argument that would configure a perception of dissonance between the preferred style of action and an eventual style that would allow better results. In fact, coherence between both is often referred by the subject. Even when an appeal is made – and repeated – to explain how previous experiences of ‘inachievement’ or failure were assessed the answers invariably revealed confidence and persistence. Surprises might have happen, but no shifts in the style of action were considered as an option.

#### *Grid-group dynamics*

This case study constitutes a remarkable example of coherence between expected and actual worlds. The absence of this *heuristic* conflict provided confidence and stability to Mayor B’s preferred style of action.

His personal dispositions and projected goals of action, as well as his picture of how it would be achieved, and through which means, constituted a clear description of a “Stipulated World” wherein clear patterns of action and a commitment to the group to whom he belongs leads us to consider it as typically *hierarchic*.

“I set the goals and the objectives. It is because of my way of leading that this Municipality as developed. We offered quality of life to all”. (MunB-M-080704)

This process of providing predictability to the social relations is attained through a perception of rules and norms that are not constraining but that allow – if one is in charge and can manoeuvre – positional authority to contribute for the attainment of group objectives. As stated by Mary Douglas this is the valid way of life for those who see ‘programming’ as the best way to solve problems (Douglas, u.d.). It allows coordination and limits dissensus.

As stated before (Chapter IV), the *hierarchist perverse/tolerant* approach to *nature* reinforces the previous perspective since it assumes the existence of a ‘safety zone’ wherein people, bounded by rules and hierarchic coordination, can easily face risks. It

tends to stimulate certainty and predictability by holding the collective together through top-down programming and decision.

Coherently, his “Actual World” presented itself as being able to offer the necessary conditions to perform as expected. His perceptions on how his sense of autonomy and of political efficacy are allowed because the nature of governance is – as expected – tractable, contribute to the confirmation of what his ‘stipulated world’ was expected to be.

From Grid-group’s typological analysis, hierarchies tend to be pro-leadership cultures as they rely on authority given by position. Scoring high on the grid axis, the *hierarchist* considers the role of local government to be indispensable for the success of the municipality:

“Local government creates the rules... the dynamics of the municipality is a consequence of the local government dynamics. It is not the only one but it is determinant. A dynamic municipality with a ‘pale’ local government is very rare. Normally it is condemned.” (MunB-M-080704)

Likewise, high group sense of belonging is another relevant characteristic of Mayor B’s *hierarchical* style:

“[...] my best group is my connexion with people. To be with everyone and hear them... the group is everyone in the municipality. All the groups, smaller ones, are only part of this larger one. That is my team. [...] My staff is just the end of a production line. My staff is the municipality. It’s a group.” (MunB-M-080704)

With no ‘sense of surprise’, the confirmation between Mayor B’s expected and actual ‘worlds’ result in a clear *hierarchic* style of leadership. Statements like “I listen, I decide” (MunB-M-080704) set a good example of this complex combination of the directive and ruling role of the ‘city boss’ with his intuitive sense of group belonging. Expressing an active role in providing guidance to the municipality is only achieved through the acceptance of his hierarchical authority (“I’m not closed inside the walls of the town hall” (MunB-M-080704), and only through assuring that his decisions are consensual, he can be positive about remaining in office.

This leader’s strictures against less active styles of leadership – one can say less directive styles – which lack any sound perspective on how a municipality should develop is not meant to be an act of asserting individual dominance over others using his constitutional powers. Quite the contrary; for Mayor B the leader who ventures into the

political arena armed only with a few tools and weak ‘intentions’ can produce far more damage than the inspired and proactive Mayor. For Mayor B,

“My role is determinant for the future of the municipality. Let me give you an example: if we look at what we have done, we contributed for the future of our young people. I influenced the future positively, conquering it and not postponing it.” (MunB-M-080704)

His Style of Action is encapsulated in a simple argument: “As a leader, I’m a leader” (MunB-M-080704). And he underlines this self-confidence assuring that “I do not wait until tomorrow when you can do it today, because efficacy is guaranteed”. As we argued before (Chapter IV), *hierarchical* leaders often prefer apathic followers, particularly if it is not an expression of dissatisfaction. In the eventuality of this last case, the exercise of authority is the best way to overcome dissensus and maintain order. Mayor B wrote later on his campaign to be re-elected: “our will is the key that makes the machine move towards development. [...] it is what inspires and gives the thrust to dream and act” (MunB-D2).

A *hierarchical* leader like this sees his *intentions* being confirmed by his *possibilities* of action and, since “the path is drawn and the objectives decided”, he strongly believes that his actions will – unquestionably – produce the expected results.

### **6.2.3. An egalitarian escaping to hierarchies when facing markets**

#### *The leader’s context*

The Mayor of Municipality C had the particularity of leading a municipality that, since 1976 (the first democratic local elections), has always been led by the communist party. Situated in the southern part of Portugal, it has 35 thousand inhabitants. With its 18 civil parishes (*freguesias*), this municipality – with the exception of a small urban area – is mostly a historically rural region with low population density and high levels of unemployment.

Local government’s political context presents some differences when compared to other case studies since only three of the four members of the executive board are members of the leading party. This minority government has two members of the board elected on the communist party list and support the leader (himself a member of the party), with four members representing the opposition (three socialists and one social democrat), as a result

from an appointment to office through 42% of the votes. One must underline the fact that one year after the case study interviews, during the 2009 local elections, this party lost – for the first time in history – the municipality governing bodies, although with the same 42% of votes. However, the socialist party had a turnout of 46%. In the time period we are analysing, the same communist minority won 40% of the seats in the Municipal Assembly.

Mayor C – 59 years old – is a medical doctor who worked in Lisbon and was invited by his party to replace the former Mayor and run for office for the first time. He leads a minority both in the executive board and in the municipal assembly.

The arrangements for the case study were done with his chief of staff two days earlier. Few minutes after the first contact he called back saying it would be possible, gladly, at the time and day the researcher suggested (MunC-FN-080709). On arrival at town hall the receptionist explained why we had to wait for few minutes since the Mayor was finishing a meeting (and he explained with whom).

The interview was conducted at his office in town hall. The Mayor offered coffees and we sat on two armchairs with a small table between us. Contrary to other interviews, there were no interruptions done by his staff, and he gave the impression of having all the time needed for the conversation – which could have gone through lunch if necessary (MunC-FN-080709). The interview finished after 110 minutes.

### *Thematic analysis*

#### Origin of intention

This first theme packed together those units of meaning that addressed personal dispositions and projected goals of the subject's actions. In the case of Mayor C both are clearly a consequence of ideological foundations and personal socialization within the close ties of party membership. Significant parts of the interview and some references made by the focus group were dominated by several mentions to ideological motivations for the exercise of the role of Mayor, and for the objectives of local government's policies.

“From an ideological perspective – important for my own motivations – we should be very attentive on social justice, and consider knowledge as a path to human dignity”.  
(MunC-M-080709)

This is strongly related to the fact that the communist party is in office since the first democratic local elections, which can have had the effect of allowing politicians to



express their ideological convictions without apprehension and not risking voter's fragmentation and polarization, since this local historical political majority has maintained a relevant group of faithful voters.

“They know us since 1976. They know we are working with them for social justice and equality.” (MunC-M-080709)

For this mandate a priority has been set as a consequence of the increasing numbers of unemployment and the consequent migration phenomenon. Providing answers to this problem would help attaining the overall goals of an ‘egalitarian’ society (MunC-FN-080709)

“We promoted recently a local poll: the main concern people presented was unemployment. I would be successful if I contributed to increase the economical activity and to create jobs”. (MunC-M-080709)

These ‘origins of intentions’ were also referred by the staff interviewed weeks later:

“He accepted to be the Mayor because he wants to improve local democracy. As he says, that is only possible if people have the material conditions to live better. And this is an effort for the entire municipality as a big collective”. (MunC-FG-0800914)

#### Phantasying of action

For Mayor C the strategy to follow in office and by the local government was obvious:

“When I ran for Mayor I was completely sure that together we could continue this improvement and avoid the immense risks that the various crisis set upon us”. (MunC-M-080709)

This strategy needed people and institutions to work together, as they are expected to, in order to promote a kind of collective benefit. The Mayor's and the local government's action seem to be unconceivable without the larger group involvement.

“The municipality is a large community and I knew we could work together”. (MunC-D1)

“And this sets another fight, which is a duty for each person and surpasses political and party borders, and needs us working together: to try to reverse this trend. [...] My role would be to represent these interests and provide them with the necessary resources to improve social justice”. (MunC-M-080709)

### “Allowers” of action

For Mayor C the public opinion is very relevant, particularly as it is capable of recognising his work. This is not presented as a legitimisation strategy; on the contrary, it is justified as the needed strategy to understand and convey people’s interests, in order to represent them as best as he can.

“We try to stimulate their participation through a project we called Participative Municipality, where we discuss with citizens our political strategies and investments. This project and some local assemblies are a way of assuring that democracy is not only the vote, but it is a regular activity.” (MunC-M-080709)

However, Mayor C faces significant constraints and unexpected behaviours:

“Local governments are constrained by financial and bureaucratic rules. We depend on the national budget and, unfortunately, on land usage (especially construction). [...] The accounting system and rules are very confusing and complex. It’s very restrictive. And our action is constrained. [...] My political efficacy is very limited. Four years in office is very short [...] there are too much things constraining us. This is very complex. I don’t have much freedom of action.” (MunC-M-080709)

He is not saying these constraints are so intense he cannot act. However, they set relevant limitations on what he is expected to do, as the focus group later confirmed, “He has the strength to overcome this.” But they also added: “the biggest problem is not the fact that we cannot solve all the problems, but realizing that businesses come and go, people are not interested in municipal issues, everyone works for himself ...” (MunC-FG-0800914)

### Context’s nature

Despite the considerations about the “allowers” of action, Mayor C assumed that “[the] future [of the municipality] depends a lot on our action” and that, although, the “difficulties local governments face in Portugal, [...] everyone expects us to lead”. In accordance to what the focus group had said, this sets the most relevant interpretation Mayor C does of the nature of the governance context. “People are disperse and individualist”, he also said.

“From a practical perspective the actors that are needed to produce change are useful and diverse. And I needed to make them come together and contribute to the development we seek. The only way possible was through leading more actively this inexistent network, and give orientation.” (MunC-M-080709)

The municipality must be, therefore, “more presidential than I intended: very mayor-centred.” Although diversity is not seen as problem, “people have different opinions, but there are no major conflicts”, their low levels of group bonding are one of the major sources of apprehension for Mayor C.

#### Strategies of action

The context asked for a leader who provided security and orientation, rather than just bringing people together under common goals. Both strategies were needed to attain the pre-determined objectives – this was particularly clear in the following transcription from a document written by the Mayor:

“We want to ‘build’ the municipality with the help and support of the people and of the collective representatives of civil society [...] and] this must follow the framework of the principles determined by the policy orientations the Municipality has promoted throughout the last decades”. (MunC-D2)

Therefore, the strategy implies bringing people together and motivating them to face problems and aims collectively, as well as giving them the necessary guidance and using all the tools available to the local government.

“[Solving this] goes beyond local government’s borders. However I’ve been trying to behave as a pivotal agent of these questions. [...] This is a collegial effort, that needs cooperation, trans-ideological actions, meeting people, and this is my main task: to gather people around these goals. In a small city like ours it is difficult to build a model of development by our own, we need others.” (MunC-M-080709)

The political powers of local government are used in order to “establish the rules and objectives and check if they are attained” (MunC-M-080709).

#### Perspectives on positional resources

Mayor C’s understanding of the origin of his legitimate use of local government’s powers represents a different approach from the common ones found in political science literature. Unable to understand its source as the consequence of holding a relevant hierarchical position – although he sees this as the only justification for the public to consider his legitimate use of authority (“they listen to me because I’m the Mayor”), this leader prefers to consider his legitimacy as a consequence of his personal professional and attitudinal profile:

“In order to have authority one must be recognized as professionally competent. I’m a medical doctor, not a politician.” (MunC-M-080709)

On the other hand, while admitting that “this is the way things happen to work”, this way explaining why he can use his capacity to influence, at the same time Mayor C sees his positional resource – together with his own profile – as being useful to take the course of actions he has foreseen and more adequate to attain the policy objectives.

“My authority allows building community ties. For that, one needs also the capacity to relate with other institutions, other social actors, which go beyond the framework within which we move ideologically. I’m a member of the communist party, but my day-to-day action as Mayor goes beyond these ideological barriers.” (MunC-M-080709)

#### Preferred attitudes

The objective of attaining ‘social justice’ – low levels of inner group differentiation – is deliverable by using local government’s tools to promote group equality, or, at least, by providing the necessary means to generate employment. The bureaucratic and top-down instruments at hand, while seen at first as inadequate and as a menace to group equality, became policy facilitators.

Mayor C ‘accepted’ his role as a “lesser evil” (MunC-D3) that should be mediated by ethical principles:

“I set transparency as my personal compass: avoiding personal benefits from the exercise of this job; considering it as transitory; being fully committed to collective interests; being rigorous on management and budget issues”. (MunC-M-080709)

The attitudes resulted from the conscience that, to promote the changes he intends to, leadership is needed, and – ultimately – it results from authority.

“Leadership is very important. But to be a leader we need authority: with an objective. Even intellectual authority! [...] Not to be authoritarian, but a leader.” (MunC-M-080709)

Therefore, from his perspective, problems are solved mainly by local government’s intervention and this possibility is highly dependent on the will and capacity of the Mayor.

### Style dissonance

As it became evident from the previous analysis, the dissonance between personal preferred (or natural) attitudes towards the exercise of power and subsequent practical reality is particularly obvious for Mayor C.

He recognizes this difference even from the ideological perspective:

“One thing is the management of the municipality, the other is my party. What I do here goes much beyond my party’s policies. [...] From a strategic perspective (my way of thinking) I’m an orthodox (a communitarian communist). From a tactical perspective (the day to day work) I’m the opposite: open and heterodox.” (MunC-M-080709)

The vocabulary that was used is noteworthy because of its remarkable capacity to – through simple and straightforward words – present this dissonance between *way of thinking* and *real work*. It expresses a need to adapt and to find the most adequate style:

“My understanding of politics, after being elected, was forced to adapt. Facing this complexity, the dispersal of actors, it was forced to change.” (MunC-M-080709)

### *Grid-group dynamics*

This case presented itself as one of the most complex ones regarding the understanding of how this Mayor took conscious decisions on the best way to act. In fact, from an inattentive perspective and without the necessary theoretical ground to allow some comprehension, we might have been lead to consider this as a completely erratic leader. Several incongruences can be found on his statements and conflicts identifiable between some pronouncements and the observable way of acting.

However, we believe that an analysis of the grid-group dynamics of his style of leadership can shed light on this problem.

First we must start with what Mayor C’s “Stipulated World” seemed to configure. His belief in low levels of social differentiation and hierarchies combined with a firm belief in group cohesiveness resemble an *egalitarian* description. His recurring animosity against bureaucracies and centralization of power coincides with this assessment. However, as we have seen before, his main source of intentional behaviour – his foundations to argue ‘I must do *something*’ – results from his ideological socialization and beliefs. This could represent a hindrance to our “stipulated world” assessment given the acceptable argument that claims that a communist approach conveys a strong belief in external and structural influence on human behaviour. These ‘superstructures’ could

represent a world view that resulted from scoring high in the grid axis of Cultural Theory, as it presumes the existence of inescapable imposed rules over individual action. Nevertheless we considered Grid-group Theory not as patterns of social relations or patterns of beliefs, but as expressions of individual worldviews and strategies (see Chapter IV). This way, we can consider that Mayor C's ideological stance expresses the recognition of these 'structures' but his preferred worldview – also in accordance to his ideology – matches to a world where those imposed rules are inexistent and hierarchical differentiation is vanished. This is, in fact, in accordance with a low grid perspective of the world.

All his *egalitarian* arguments seem to have faced important constraints. When asked to explain how he senses his autonomy and his political efficacy, together with his description of the nature of the governance context, a completely different picture is presented:

“The context – with so many actors – is complex and with no clear strategy or rules; and I need to promote cooperation to give sense to things. [...] I have autonomy, but there are some constraints given by bureaucracy and [social] fragmentation.” (MunC-M-080709)

Especially these recurrent references to individualism and social fragmentation revealed a sense of surprise and even disappointment. Mayor C describes his municipality as a place where competition and autonomy are favored against common goals and group bonding. This context seems to be weak both in group boundaries as in regulation. While the latter is acceptable from the Mayor's perspective, the former seems unacceptable. This context would prefer individual entrepreneurship and competition, and this seems unable to provide solutions form the main problems this Mayor has indentified in his Municipality. Hidden outcomes and unforeseen futures are too hazardous for an *egalitarian*. In other words, an *individualist* world is a menace to an *egalitarian* leader.

However, this *surprise* did not result in an *individualist* style of leadership. In fact, everything tends to indicate some kind of *hierarchical* style.

“My decisions have an impact on governance. [...] We were given authority and powers to lead the municipality and these must be used – it is the only way, I know now – to provide social justice for all. [...] People must be listened to, but the last decision must be ours: they all have different motivations and interests, and we contribute to gather them through objective and strategy setting. [...] But local

government is the main actor: we must not lose our responsibility.” (MunC-M-080709)

Mayor C recognizes that this strategy has produced relevant outputs that make him confident in keeping on the same track:

“I believe these last three years represent an important change regarding the municipalities’ economical dynamics. We needed to lead this process.” (MunC-M-080709)

This leader expects to provide security and stability to the group through the top-down establishment of objectives and rules. Hierarchies are needed to provide the possibility to offer guidance, coordination and planning. This is clearly how Mayor C understands his way of acting and how others judge his style:

“Orientation. That is the word! He leads giving orientation. [...] He uses his position as Mayor to bring different sensibilities and institutions together [...]”. (MunC-FG-080914)

“I’ve signed a protocol with the Bishop, in the interest of the cultural heritage promotion... and he is the Bishop, and I am a communist! But I can be more helpful if I do the best I can to promote the development of our municipality.” (MunC-M-080709)

The surprise – “it is the only way, I know now”, in his own words – that results from a dissonance between his “Stipulated” and the “Actual” Worlds had an interesting disclosure. None of the more obvious styles of leadership were adopted, but a different one. As we set before (see chapter IV) it would be expectable that an individual, facing this kind of rationality conflict, would be directed towards a drastic change in his style of leadership. We called this an *Escape Migration Strategy*, and it tried to suggest the consequences of this heuristical conflict. Although initially this was considered less likely to happen, we claimed that the highest improbability is the one that would justify ‘diagonal escapes’ within the grid-group framework, as it would convey a radical change both in grid as in group dimensions. However, this case seems to shed new light on the probability of finding these kinds of strategies, although it does not represent the extreme cases we theoretically referred. In fact, we are analyzing a ‘simple’ case of *Escape Strategy* towards the ‘most similar’ style – in Mayor C’s personal history it represented getting higher on the Grid axis, while ‘keeping his group together’.

This *Strategy* can unveil a dramatic response to a sense of lack of Political Will. In fact, some of these heuristical conflicts can tend to be extremely ‘harmful’ for the leader’s



confidence on his ability to exercise his role. Mayor C gave some clues that can contribute to this interpretation, particularly when claiming extreme difficulties in assuring his political efficacy given the fact that “people don’t want to work together [... they] are individualists”. Opting out would be a possible answer, but Mayor C chose to change dramatically his strategy of action, when compared to his prior expectations. In this case we can claim that *possibility* had extreme influence on his *Political Will*, rather than *intention*.

Finally, he offers a kind of personal justification for adopting an unnatural style of leadership, claiming it actually contributes to attain his projected goals for the municipality. This way Mayor C explains why his action results from a conscious assessment of the actual conditions he has to perform:

“I’m a member of a collective, but the individual role of people is very important, particularly in leading positions. In fact it is relevant when we face social fragmentation and individualism.” (MunC-M-080709)

It is important to underline the fact that some of Mayor C’s own perspectives about his role and the description provided by his staff can lead to interpret his style of leadership as being closer to the *regulator* kind:

“I believe we must give a framework for public policies and then let the social agents act by themselves. But we must be cautious and try to check and supervise how things are going. And this is possible because we are a small municipality.” (MunC-M-080709)

“He isn’t a controller. He meets people, signs agreements, sets some goals and indicators, and then [...] things must work by themselves. [...] Yes, he leads. But does not decide everything. [...] Things flow”. (MunC-FG-080914)

This theoretically unexpected result sets an important clue that must be taken into account: the possibility of considering our framework’s property spaces as more flexible and more permeable. In this particular case we might be witnessing the similar effect of the *Influence Strategy* of an *individualist* climbing the ‘bureaucratization ladder’ – being influenced by a *hierarchical* worldview. The *Escape Strategy* must, therefore, be further explored.

The expression of the need to adapt and to find the most adequate style sometimes is not as obvious as one would expect and resulted from a dissonance between what he called

‘way of thinking’ and ‘real work’. This conveys the same logical reasoning we have offered to conceptualize Political Will with two dimensions: *intention* and *possibility*.

The incomprehensible incongruence and dissonances that one could find at first sight became understandable when analysing them through our framework of Grid-group dynamics of leadership styles.

#### **6.2.4. A hierarchic ‘debureaucratization’**

##### *The leader’s context*

Before the meeting with the Mayor of Municipality D we had no information about his profile, besides acknowledging the fact that a prize was recently won in a national contest on urban regeneration. This municipality with nearly 35 thousand inhabitants in the northern coast of the country is – as all the other – mostly rural.

Regarding its political context, three members of the executive board were elected on the social-democrat party list and support the leader (himself a member of the party), with three members representing the opposition (two from the socialist party and one from the popular party), as a result from an appointment to office through 50% of the votes in 2005. Although this result represented some votes lost between the 2001 (56%) and the 2005 elections, it is important to stress the fact that he won again in 2009, this time with 59% of the votes (which occurred one year after this case study was conducted). This result represented an important electoral recovery since it got closer to the voting numbers of 1997 when this Mayor was first elected as Deputy Mayor of the person he later – between elections – replaced. The same majority won 49% of the seats in the Municipal Assembly.

Mayor D, 38 years old, has a degree in Biology and has been the mayor of this municipality for 9 years (at the time of the interview). Although young, he has a long record as a member of the municipal executive and used his image as an experienced person to win his seat in office, after accepting the challenge to replace the former mayor and to run as main candidate one year after, in 2001. Now he leads a safe majority both in the executive board and in the municipal assembly.

The arrangements for the case studies were done by email directly with the Mayor, and afterwards the details were arranged with his secretary. The interview was appointed for the end of a working day. I was asked to wait, since that was the weekly day when he had appointments with community members (MunD-FN-081008). At first site, and

compared to other similar cases, this town hall services seemed to be well organized and with very good infrastructural conditions.

While waiting – and “waited for long” (MunD-FN-081008) – we noticed that several issues of the local government’s newsletter were available at the waiting room and also in other places in the building.

The interview was conducted at his office. We sat at a really large working table, clean and without any papers. The interview finished after 120 minutes. Although at the end of an apparently busy day, he took the time to answer comfortably to all questions (MunD-FN-081008).

#### *Grid-group dynamics*

This fourth case presents some similarities with the former one. Despite the disparities regarding their ‘departure’ and ‘arrival points’ – since their Actual and Stipulated worldviews were different – both styles of leadership result from a path followed on the same grid-group diagonal.

Mayor D former experience as a deputy mayor, with a significant part of his adult life spent in local government executive functions, may explain why he was very unambiguous in assuming that he possessed a clear perspective on the role of local political power and on what were the goals of his action:

“I saw our locality as highly dependent on what we did here at town hall.[...] Despite the relevant work of *freguesias* and all the non-political organizations, our success was only possible if we took the right decisions, and set the correct objectives.”  
(MunD-M-081008)

This *hierarchical* worldview is frankly assumed by him, “I saw everything from top to bottom, and we were on top of the Municipality”, and confirmed by his close staff: “as deputy mayor he was like the former Mayor, our ‘small’ big boss”. These personal disposition to see everything as controlled by strict rules, which he was able to control and alter, because he was in ‘command’, allowed him to consider the action of a Mayor to be: “the source of a safe path for development”. The authority given by his position would sanction his decisions and the way they would be implemented.

However, as he said, “we change when it is for the best of our community” (MunD-D1). This process can be depicted by the descriptors used to explain his understandings on

how his autonomy and political efficacy as Mayor. Mayor D sensed a “certain distance” between the public and local government:

“Yes, we are here. And we have a particular job to do. Nothing more. They don’t want us to do more than fix some roads, to keep water being provided, and so on... [...] I felt this was really odd, given our ‘very Portuguese’ tendency to expect many things the state.” (MunD-M-081008)

His autonomy as a leader was not questioned by Mayor D, “I have the opportunity to do many things [... at least] much more than people really want”, but he sensed that his political efficacy was only achieved if the work of all the relevant agents succeeds. The capabilities to provide the desired goal of “urban development” are scattered on the context of governance.

Mayor D’s description of the context of governance contributed also to our assessment of his “Actual World” as being *individualist*. In fact, the *benign* description of the context’s nature included expressions as: “risk is necessary”, “with the right tools we can prosper without a strong local government”, “we have different opinions and perspectives, but when it works like this... it is much better than imposing them”.

“Success is much more unpredictable than most of Mayors believe. [We, Mayors] are ‘educated’ to be the bosses, and our role is driven that way, [however] it does not work that way in real world”. (MunD-M-081008)

Although Mayor D considered this self-seeking and atomistic context to constrain is original intentions, he revealed to be concerned with an excess of “individualism” that would, without any control, lead to a “community without identity”. More than just assuming the context nature as intractable, Mayor D considered he could still play a role in providing ‘value’ to the governance arrangement. During a brief discussion within the focus group, there was a consensus regarding the idea that: “he did not cross his arms, he fights everyday for the development of [Municipality D]” and “he can’t do it alone, but he brings people together and gives some ‘fuel to the machine’”.

Leadership is seen as restricted by context tractability since the possibility to “transform ideas into real results” is very limited. The possibilities he discerns constitute a conflict with his “Stipulated World”, as for *hierarchists* command and strong leadership are allowed and expected to work. This dissonance – or heuristic clash between *intention* and *possibility* – was explained by Mayor D as follows:

“There is a job for me to do as Mayor. I was elected and – more important – I wanted to be elected because there are many things I must do here. We have a strategy for [Municipality D]. [However], one can’t always do things the way they should be done. [...] Reality asks for pragmatism. And we must understand what are the possibilities to [attain the goals].” (MunD-M-081008)

This clear description of the conflict between *intention* (“there are things I must do here”) and *possibilities* (“reality sets the possibilities”), corresponds – in the case of this Mayor – to the *surprise* that results from a *hierarchist* facing possibilities only through *individualist* worldviews.

Once again a type migration with the necessary grid-group dynamics allows understanding why Mayor D’s style of leadership does not correspond to an expected – *hierarchist*. Moreover, it sheds light on why his style has changed:

“He is, now, a much more open person. He has his point of view, but he knows that most of the times it won’t prevail. [...] During the first years in office he understood meetings with people as a duty – and an unpleasant one – and clearly preferred seeing his ideas done. [But] nowadays he works with everyone, inside the town hall, and with all the institutions and organizations as if we were all members of a team... [...] He delegates decisions much more than he used to”. (MunD-FG-081209)

Although assuming an *original position* that was coherent with his own worldview (with prior intentions prevailing), this became a merely *transitional position* and, influenced by his perceptions of the available possibilities of action, chose a more intermediate position. The debureaucratization diagonal that corresponds to an *Influence Migration Strategy* of a *hierarchist* influenced by *individualism* is expected to originate the ‘regulator’ type of leader. We were particularly inclined to accept this conclusion since the examples used to describe action convey consistent characteristics:

“I believe I’m much more of a Mayor who sets some incentives, than someone who imposes goals. I once used this metaphor in a meeting of the Municipal Assembly: we offer the car and teach how to drive, people than go wherever they want”. (MunD-M-081008)

“He modernized local government: all public services are completely oriented for the public [...] and] much more efficient. The objective that was set results from the assumption that we are here to provide a service to the municipality. And that is our main task. [...] therefore all the changes had the objective of offering efficacy and quality to them”. (MunD-FG-081209)

The administrative reforms that were undertaken followed a coherent path with the perspective offered to us by the Mayor. They were a consequence of the need to be more

efficient and provide exactly what the people want from local government, rapidly and with quality. Objectives were set, public servants and services performance assessment processes were implemented, management skills were developed through training, specialized staff was recruited, and e-government started to be a priority.

This “fight against bureaucracy” – in Mayor D’s words – is the “best way to offer a good service to the public”. In the middle of the ‘debureaucratization’ ladder a *hierarchist* leader can ‘offer’ the guidance and stability to the group of followers, but recognizes their autonomy and the eventual success that results from loosening some of the tight rules that a more directive form of leading could impose, therefore assuming a *regulator* style of leadership.

#### **6.2.5. The ‘Protector’**

##### *The leader’s context*

Municipality E has 26 thousand inhabitants and is situated in the centre part of Portugal in a rural area, surrounded by mountains, and particularly isolated. This municipality, of the five case studies, is the one whose distance to regional political and administrative centres is the most significant, although a recent nearby highway has contributed to reduce this sense of physical remoteness. Regardless of this municipality’s historical relevance, it is not one of the politically or economically most important for the country’s political landscape.

Local politics, after the 2005 elections, had the following consequence: three members of the executive board were elected on the social democratic party list and support the leader (himself a member of the party), with three other members representing the opposition (all from the socialist party), as a result from an appointment to office through 50% of the votes (64% in 2009 after the interview). The same majority won 50% of the seats in the Municipal Assembly. Until 2001 the local executive was lead by a socialist.

Mayor E, 41 years old, is a former engineer who was elected for the first time in 2005 and has been the mayor of this municipality for 3 years. He leads a secure majority both in the executive board and in the municipal assembly, elected by the social democratic party.

This interview seemed, in the beginning, extremely difficult to appoint since it had been successively postponed. Apparently with fewer human resources, at the town hall we were lead to a receptionist / telephonist who called a member of the Mayor's staff and asked me to wait (MunE-FN-090106). A local government's newsletter was available, although dated from three months before the interview, with several references to the Mayor, with pictures, and with an editorial extremely courteous to him (MunE-D1).

The interview was conducted at his office. He avoided his desk and the large meetings table, and offered seats in two comfortable armchairs. The interview took 110 minutes and he seemed completely available for the time we needed.

#### *Grid-group dynamics*

Once more we encountered a case that illustrates an *Influence Migration Strategy*. A different one, but still with the same general features: a discrepancy between motivations and goals, and the possibilities offered by the 'reality' of governance context to fulfil the personal preferences and to allow reaching the desired objectives.

The case of Mayor E is particularly relevant since it provided the only description we found of a worldview that corresponds to the *fatalist* type.

This was a Mayor that had to present himself as fully committed to his job, as one of the main disapprovals about the performance of the former Mayor was an alleged multiplicity of other activities besides the expected dedication to his public role. As he wrote in his candidacy presentation speech: "I am a man of only one mission [...] when elected Mayor, I'll only be a Mayor" (MunE-D3). This message of commitment was found, again, in his slogan for the 2009 campaign: "With [Municipality E], with soul and heart" (MunE-D4).

Mayor E claimed that this pledge to fully commit oneself to the role of Mayor was – and still is – the main obligation he felt that the public demanded from him:

"I must provide the conditions [Municipality E] needs to develop, to grow, to catch private investments, to gain influence [...]. I must do this every day, without rest. [...] That is the role of local governments" (MunE-M-090106).

Besides underlining this dedication to his role, he stressed the fact that, together with a clear goal of action, this commitment gave substance and reasons for his motivations and dispositions. "To assure the economic development of [Municipality E]



and doing it with all my strengths” (MunE-M-090106) would be attainable through an important role performed by the local government: to provide the necessary means.

The exercise of power is expected to assure these goals. “The community answers and reacts to our daily performance [...]; the role of local government is exactly that one: assuring that the conditions are adequate for generating employment, quality of life, economical development, health, culture, and so on...” The gestures used by Mayor E were very eloquent and added to his words: he drew an imaginary pyramid and when he explained the role of local government he pointed at the top of it and used his hands to express a kind of flow that went from top to bottom (MunE-FN1-090106). This pyramid of action illustrates the pivotal role he considers institutional structures to have in providing the means to attain its projected goals.

The focus group interview allowed corroborating our first considerations on Mayor E’s “Stipulated” World. “He feels that the executive board can have a tremendous influence and its performance can produce important effects on [Municipality E]” (MunE-FG-090106). This group argued that local government had a relevant institutional – supervising and controlling – role.

Mayor E’s “Stipulated World” conveys all the characteristics common to those of the *hierarchist* leader. He sees the context of governance as tractable so long as the institutional conditions are available and if the public (followers) accept his authority to be exercised. The assumptions on the exercise of power, together with his projected strategies of action and goals, correspond to a worldview that results from considering his context as highly shaped by rules, with hierarchical role differentiation, and clear patterns of action – ‘high grid’; and, at the same time, a context that reflects strong group sense of membership, commitment to this community and clear group boundaries – ‘high group’. He complemented this analysis by simple saying: “These are just my convictions. I know what I have to do.”

However, he set aside his convictions, although important since they shaped his way of acting, and he admitted he had to face a complex and difficult reality:

“It is very difficult to do anything. The bureaucracy is immense; it’s almost impossible to increase our resources, and we needed much more to do what we want... this is an unpredictable job!” (MunE-M-090106)

Actually, regarding his personal capabilities to exercise the role of Mayor in order to attain his projected goals, Mayor E was very clear and straightforward:

“I have the competencies needed to manage a locality like ours; however, I feel I’m seriously ‘hand cuffed’...” (MunE-M-090106)

In fact, a different picture is presented when a description about the governance context of Municipality E is asked for. Despite all the strong convictions about the exercise of power, a relevant sense of powerlessness is suggested, particularly as a consequence of a very much limited sense of political efficacy and of autonomy. In the first case, he explains it as a consequence of the governance context, given all the social fragmentation, private conflicting interests, and “people’s disorientation”, and not as a personal lack of capabilities or as institutional malfunction. As for his lack of autonomy, the main reason is considered to be the “oppression of the rules and regulations... and it is not because we decide things that – although their quality and relevance – they will be implemented... there are a lot of obstacles to overcome” (MunE-M-090106).

Mayor E used frequently during the interview the expression “people’s disorientation and uncertainty about the future”. This personal reading on how people may see their own lives is particularly relevant as a *fatalism* descriptor.

The recurrent statements of style inadequacy, divergence between expected and actual contexts and dissonance between the objectives and means considered as necessary and the possibilities to attain them, present good reasons to consider his actual style of leadership as a consequence of this conflict. Mayor E is described as:

“a follower of his own convictions: that a strategy must be given, and quality of life assured [...]. His authority is his quotidian conquest: he knows he has a role to play and must show that to people.” (MunE-FG-090106)  
“[...] in the end... I’m just helping people. That’s what we do here. We help people overcome their difficulties. And we are needed to do that.” (MunE-M-090106)

A description of *fatalism*, as clear-cut as this one, should not be regarded as less important. One could be led to consider it as sufficiently constraining to become ‘paralyzed’ – and it is important to remember that this sensation of powerlessness can be a sufficient condition for inaction. A context where this culture is sensed as dominant could lead to an unavoidable sense of inefficacy and, afterwards, to ‘cross the arms and rest the case’. We could consider this to constitute excellent ‘habitat’ to ‘non leaders’, or more

exactly to individuals with lack of Political Will. However, despite these scarce possibilities to act and the strong obstacles that are sensed, this Mayor relied on his personal dispositions – on his *intention* – to tackle these adversities.

This disequilibrium between expected and actual worlds is not responded to through a complete change in his leadership style, but by adapting his *original position*, coping with his *intention* and his interpreted *possibilities*. The case of Mayor E highlights the situations where personal motivations – a sense of what one must do – drive his way of action, although within a context that is particularly unfavourable. This *Influence Migration Strategy* of a leader that considers he must act in a *hierarchical* way, but faces a context of *fatalism*, resulted as a style of action compatible with the “need to provide direction and assistance” (MunE-M-090106) or, as we previously called it: a *Protector*.

### 6.3. Main findings: causal mechanisms communalities

Predictions and expectations of the previously developed theory must be contrasted with the outcomes of the case studies in order to assess if they are consistent. These case studies were addressed as *plausibility probes*, with the intent of determining whether our theoretical claims had any realistic support and if they needed adjustment. Rather than offering an extensive and complete testing of all the claims and its consequences, this research design offered additional consistency to our arguments, although it may have also contributed to their refutation. Addressing causal significance and process-tracing allows us to provide important depth to the theory.

In this matter we follow Alfred Schütz’s approach to *causality* as an agent’s confined rational capability to relate the subjectively perceived means to attain projected ends. Schütz (1972) argued causality to be something private to the individual and only through the agent’s account on his motives one can assess it. Consequently, we avoided stripping all the subjectivity of the agent’s individual interpretation of their situation as leader, since allowing this to rise above all the other secondary units of analysis, we can assess of the more complex processes of agency.

The process-tracing task was consciously considered to be assessable through an emphasis on *how* questions, rather than straightforward *whys*. All five case studies were aimed at capturing the Mayors’ causal drivers of their political actions, through unveiling

their perceptions of internal and external constraints. The in-depth analysis of these single units, and their comparison, provided the clues to better understand what connects an action to an event, motivation or preference. In fact, mere congruence of outcomes with our general expectations does not necessarily provide reliability. Hence, engaging in process tracing one can identify causal processes that support the role of the determinants of Political Will in leadership style formation. This task presented itself as the main advantage of the methodology we chose to address the research questions. Besides that, it also provided the opportunity for extensive dialogue between theory and data, offering depth of knowledge on our main theme.

The systematic method of thematic data analysis offered a step-by-step approach to the investigation of the constituents of the phenomenon through the explication process. The eight themes that emerged delivered information on how political leaders learn to tackle their context and provide leadership. For all case studies, each theme was presented followed by participant's quotes to demonstrate grounding in the data, and later grouped on second level themes that allowed the data-theory-dialogue and a theoretically coherent grid-group analysis of the collected data.

Accordingly, the key finding – common to all case studies – is the leaders' 'ability' to differentiate what they want to do and how it would be attainable, from what they are able to do given the constraints set by the context, their autonomy and sense of political efficacy. This faculty to tell apart both dimensions in all cases came naturally without the researcher's need to pose extra interpreting, specifying or direct questions, and allowed mayors to elaborate freely and providing this information without further interference.

Actually, this immediate and apparently obvious differentiation between "I must" and "I can" statements was always presented to the researcher as a prior consideration to the presentation of the way the subject managed a particular situation. In other words, whenever the explanation of a particular action and of a style of leadership was asked for, immediately this distinction was 'offered' before the description. In fact, we considered in several field notes that most of the answers directed at the style of leadership characterization were essentially descriptive, while all the other needed justifications. No action was described without an explanation that resulted from the introduction of the 'possibility' dimension of the process of individual decision making.

This causal pattern suggested by these leaders was most often reported as a consequence of a *prior* setting that originated a ‘*then*’ situation. Action occurs after, and not during or before thinking about it. This is coherent with our previous considerations on the *agency* feature of human action, and particularly with its goal oriented dimension and intentional content.

### *Intention*

Our research question, as well as our first research hypothesis considered leadership style as agent chosen, that is to say that a leader has a rational opportunity to ‘decide’ which way of acting he will follow. In fact, as explained above, there is considerable overlap between the data collected in all the interviews and this theoretical assumption. Moreover, the effective action – what we called an expression of will – is considered to be a consequence of a conscious decision on what means are necessary to attain a predetermined goal. This intentional content of action is referred by all our interviewees with the following expressions: “I must”, “I’m expected to”, “My task is”, “I wanted to”, “I imagined it to be”, “I believed”, and so on. It is rather interesting to notice that most of these expressions were used in the past tense. This also suggested, in most of the cases, a clear notion of the *a priori* feature of the *intentional* dimension of will. Only after a description of the *possibilities* (which we will address afterwards) they start to use the verbs in present tense. A typical sentence that combines both dimensions would be similar to this: “I wanted to do, but I realize the constraints, so I will act like this”. Although the past tense was used, we were not convinced that *intention* is a dimension of Political Will bounded to an *a priori* existence. On the contrary, our cases support the claim that *intention* coexist within the agent’s ‘field of inputs’ that drive Will<sup>1</sup>:

*Mayor A*: “I have this full commitment with a project, but I know that it is only achievable with some adjustments.”

*Mayor C*: “From a strategic perspective (my way of thinking) I’m an orthodox (a communitarian communist). From a tactical perspective (the day to day work) I’m the opposite: open and heterodox. [...] I live day-to-day in between.”

*Mayor D*: “There is a job for me to do as Mayor. I was elected and – more important – I wanted to be elected because there are many things I must do here. We have a strategy for [Municipality D]. [However], one can’t always do things the way they should be done.”

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the first one, all quotations hereafter are from interview material or written documents of the first three cases, and are used as illustrative sentences

There is always a way ‘things should or must be done’, and this is what all the Mayors suggested. In addition, they all present these personal dispositions, projected strategy and goals of action, and assumptions on the exercise of power as the *locus* of a permanent tension (naturally this is more evident in the four cases of the Mayors to whom style dissonance was obvious). It is this “silent conflict” (in Mayor C’s words) that, coexisting with their sense of *possibilities*, drives the choice of the strategy of action. Accordingly to their rationalization, these *intentions* have different origins and can be grouped in two separate, although, interconnected fields: *dispositionally* originated or *goal* oriented. In the first case these leaders point out their beliefs, ideology, moral obligations, or – more vaguely – personal interests. As for the second, they mention the objectives set by others (namely the public), personal ambitions, strategic plans, or generically what they called ‘mission’. These ‘origins’ of *intention* were more clearly depicted after conducting the case studies, but reinforced our previous theoretical claim that distinguished ‘because’ from ‘in-order-to’ motives.

The choice of means – which can have these two origins – to achieve a desired objective has shown to possess a causal relation with the leader’s Political Will. Therefore, the first hypothesis we addressed has found sufficient support to be considered as valid in order to provide consistency to our theoretical claim.

### *Possibility*

Simultaneously, most participants were aware of the formal conditions they had to be enabled to engage in action. Actually, our second hypothesis advanced the possibility that this particular sense of autonomy is a relevant factor to explain Political Will: that is to say that it is a consequence of the Mayor’s sense of being enabled to lead, because perceptions about his formal conditions made it possible. Our interviews allowed us to expand this aspect, including also the sense of autonomy towards partisan or ideological foundations, pressures from central government or international agencies, the social composition of a locality, the party composition of municipality’s executive board, and towards eventual pre-existing political constraints. All of these were explicit in our interviews:

*Mayor A:* “Everything has an important influence on my action: interest groups, like businesses and associations; but we must share projects and will, looking for



consensus. (...)Being the *head* of a coalition, I must take into account also the opinion of the other political party.”

*Mayor B:* “There are no big external influences (...). I decide on my own. I rely on the work of my staff, but they know who is in charge. (...) Meetings are important to give feedback, but must be kept short.”

*Mayor C:* “There are several obstacles, particularly the financial and bureaucratic ones, which result from central government’s pressures. (...) I don’t forget that I was elected by the Communist Party, and I share an ideology. However this doesn’t make me blind to new trends in local management.”

This broader notion of autonomy (or lack of it) comprises, therefore, both the formal and informal rules of governance determined by context and constitutions, and the consequences of the mayors’ understandings about political accountability – how do they appraise their relations with those that elect and keep them in office. A more individual/proactive or a more consensual/reactive attitude can result from this perception.

Several approaches attach relevance to these influential factors. Svava’s (1994) emphasis on the relationships between the mayor and his council; Elgie’s (1995) ‘institutional structures’ and ‘needs of society’; John and Cole’s (1999) ‘contextual’, ‘institutional’, ‘party organization’ and other ‘external’ factors; and Judd’s (2000) ‘national and local pressures’ are some of the elements identified.

In the interviews for our case studies, answering on which are the favourable conditions or main obstacles to be successful as a Mayor, other characteristics were common to our interviewees:

*Mayor A:* “Of course, public opinion makes me think, it can adjust policies. I’m a kind of administrator of citizen’s ideas about our municipality’s future.”

*Mayor B:* “What influences decision the most is my intuition. (...) I don’t feel under pressure by particular interests and citizen’s opinions. I know the way and I have been judged and elected for that.”

*Mayor C:* “Citizen’s engagement is extremely relevant for the success of the municipality. Of course that we – in the town hall – are expected to lead and present the main option, but everyone is needed to accomplish those goals.”

The before mentioned tension between leadership and participation – the ‘democratic dilemma’ - sets this challenge. In fact, accountability is particularly important for this aspect of *possibilities*, not from a democratic theory approach, but from the Mayors’ point of view. Being in charge is also being held responsible, liable, and accountable by their constituents. The answer to the question ‘what shall I do?’ will



certainly depend on the Mayors' position towards citizens and power<sup>2</sup>. Citizens' engagement, although of undeniable importance in local regimes theory – and of empirical evidence when local governance efficiency is at stake (Brannan, John and Stoker, 2007) – puts pressure on mayoral leadership to act in a more consensual way or, rather, in an individualist manner. This “complex and continuous exchange between leadership and citizens and checks and balance to that leadership” (Stoker, 2006) might generate, therefore, one of the most intangible but strong forces that moves the assessment of *possibilities* that drive Political Will.

A third aspect is a consequence of the existence (or the lack) of resources – human, physical, economical, technical, and/or his own capabilities. In Hambleton and Bullock's (1996) set of needed factors for local governance efficiency, resources are one of the main issues. In addition, our definition of Political Will sets the sufficiency of resources as an important drive to enable will. This factor is difficult to assess since both situations can put pressure on the leader to move in two different directions. Having ‘enough resources’ can leave him with the possibility of ‘resting his case’ and limit his action by a *dependent* way of leading the locality, or might give him the needed energy and thrill to ‘go by his own’. ‘Lack of resources’ might lead him to opt for a more *dependent* style, because he feels limited in action, or might impel him towards an *independent* style of leadership, trying by his own to overcome constraints.

Therefore, we need to focus our attention not on the facts that give a sense of autonomy, but – once again – on how does the leader *interpret* these facts. The perception of these constraints gives the Mayor a narrow corridor to walk through that will lead him to a one-way exit: the *possibility* to adopt a particular style of leadership. Of course, in some cases, autonomy from these *perceived restrictions* can change by chance, time, and action or by the leaders' will. However, our argument – which we consider to have been confirmed – is that given a particular moment in time the style of leadership must result from the Mayor's *possibilities* of action that result from this *sense of autonomy*.

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<sup>2</sup> The ability to influence behaviour and to get people to do things they would not otherwise do, as Pfeffer (1992) describes power, is of particular significance within local governance arrangement (Southern, 2002). Hastings (1999) suggested that the issues of power have been largely ignored in studies of partnerships, including local government. Location of power was also the main focus of Mouritzen and Svava's (2002) work.

We should also consider the fact that a higher sense of autonomy towards constitutions, accountability and resources will inspire the *possibility* dimension of Political Will to ‘deliver’ a more confident style of leadership; otherwise, he will act less freely and with strong ‘self-restraints’.

*Mayor A:* “I feel I have some autonomy, but I’m not free.”

*Mayor B:* “I have sufficient political powers, resources, and competences.”

*Mayor C:* “[all the constraints] prevent me from being completely autonomous.”

The perceptions about constitutional powers and those of local government in Portugal, the availability of resources and accountability matter to influence their Sense of Autonomy.

We found that we must avoid interpreting the results as permitting a straightforward ‘linkage’ between sense of autonomy and Political Will, which could lead to eventual errors of analysis, like considering this to be a continuous dimension; hence, the higher the leader is on the autonomy axis, the greater the degree of Political Will. That is not confirmed by our analysis. In fact, more than a causal relation we found that, depending on the leader’s perception about his autonomy, different *heuristics* are ‘activated’: dissimilar *worldviews* about his actual context result from this perception. Therefore, we can claim that the formulation of our second hypothesis allowed this interpretation and, as a consequence, to consider it as valid: the leader’s Political Will is *driven by his perception about the conditions* he has – it is driven and can produce plural consequences.

Actually, the third hypothesis we addressed also finds the same relevant confirmation from the case studies with similar consequences. We were interested in knowing if Political Will is driven by a perception of efficacy. Levine’s (1980) dichotomy between leaders’ will to produce high or low policy impact fits into this hypothesis if we expand this notion to a broader dichotomy: the leader’s *belief* that his action will or will not have significant policy impact.

The Mayors’ context is explained by their own words in completely different ways, and for that reason they consider their role as a result of these different approaches:

*Mayor A:* “Different people have different interests, however my role is to gather people around common goals, and take those positive energies to achieve the political priorities for the municipality. (...) The context is, therefore, highly complex, but it is a real challenge. (...) all the agents must be mobilized and

motivated. We need all the partners (and more engaged) to achieve the objectives.”

*Mayor B:* “The Mayor’s actions determine the quality of life of the population, particularly through public investment. (...) The Mayor must direct: private businesses are egoistic and associations are self-centred (...). I have no partnerships, because they are harmful for the success of the municipality.”

*Mayor C:* “Partnerships are absolutely necessary, because it is almost impossible for a Mayor to have sufficient influence to make public policies succeed!”

Different beliefs about how others are motivated to action, and what do they expect from local authorities were perfectly identifiable. The above-mentioned divergences about contexts in similar governance environment reinforce the need to assume it as an important clue to take into account when studying the determinants of Political Will. We claim that leaders who understand their environment as a complex network of policy delivery as opposite to others who sense that their environment is really not so complex, will have a different effect on their sensed *possibilities* to act.

Our interviewed Mayors explained how their actions influence the achievement of the desired success for the municipality, and we got the same significant differences:

*Mayor A:* “I’m an optimist, but I know I have some restrictions, and the Mayor alone can’t produce real changes. (...) We all need to work together.”

*Mayor B:* “My work reveals it. The municipality is changing for better. (...) We leaded change and contributed for the success of our municipality. (...) I brought a lot of businesses to work here.”

*Mayor C:* “It’s restricted due to several factors that I can’t control, and it only works with the help of other local agents.”

The perception of *political efficacy* through these networks of governance is, therefore, important to explain a second dimension of Political Will in a particular setting: *possibility*.

Therefore, the leader’s Political Will is determined by perceptions on the tractability of the context in which he finds himself operating. This dimension encapsulates attitudes and behaviors towards change and problem solving. Explaining how Mayors understand the complexity of the context wherein they act will contribute to comprehend their Political Will.

Our hypothesis claims that the perception of the efficacy of a leader’s decision implementation will have different impacts on Political Will. One can understand environment as a complex network of policy deliberation and service providing agents, with widespread community change and cleavages, identifying the *regime* wherein they act

with a high degree of institutional fragmentation in the public and the private realm, and assuming governing as an interactive process. On the other hand, it is also acceptable to sense environment as more undemanding or as perfectly tractable through local authority's involvement.

Data from our case studies revealed the dichotomy between these two perspectives. Mayors had different points of view on how to produce the desired effects with a particular public policy. Asking for the description of past examples of how decision-making processes were undertaken, they answered:

*Mayor A:* "I provided guidance at the initial meeting, because I had to implement it, but it only worked because – finally – we shared that common goal."

*Mayor B:* "It's the town-hall competence. And that is what people expect from us. If we are efficient, then the municipality and its population grow and get wealthier. Without this leading role, I don't know where we all would be right now!"

*Mayor C:* "All the local associations and the church gathered for a meeting. We had to decide what to do and get to a consensus of how to implement that strategy. This is how things work!"

Personal capabilities, history of past successes or failures and the tractability of the governance context were, therefore, identified as the main ingredients of the Mayor's sense of *political efficacy*.

Again, all Mayors revealed to be particularly concerned and attentive on the success and efficacy of their actions. This seemed to be a constitutive characteristic of a political leader, since goal attainment is, definitively, determinant for his existence: a leader is a leader only if he is able to provide leadership. Although apparently obvious, this condition needed confirmation, and the assessment of capabilities, of the context tractability and the feedback from previous experiences were common features referred as relevant sources of the agent's sense of political efficacy. Again, as in the previous hypothesis, this is not a way of determining 'how much Political Will' a leader has, but what kind of picture of his world he is depicting.

Although we found no case of lack of Political Will, which does not allow us to provide complete reliability, we may provide a partial assessment of the need to sense autonomy and political efficacy in order to have Political Will. As a matter of fact, even in the case of the Mayor who 'faced *fatalism*' and the Mayor to whom the dissonance was 'more disturbing' – which resulted in an *escape strategy* – all argued they had autonomy and efficacy (at least, enough of both to continue leading).

Our hypotheses found solid ground on the case studies, and were further improved by the clarification of which elements were taken into account when defining both aspects of *possibility*. The first as an expression of autonomy towards accountability, as a result of having sufficient constitutional powers and resources, and as a conscience of strong group belonging. The second as an expression of sufficient personal capabilities, of fostering histories of success, of context tractability and of not being restrained by strong external rules.

These two aspects, exposed in the second and third hypotheses, seem particularly relevant since they convey the leader's answer to the question: *can I act?* As we have seen after the case studies' analysis, more than a simple *yes* or *no* answer, the biggest contribution of these two features (autonomy and efficacy) is the ways they allow explaining *how can* a leader act when facing a particular *worldview*. Therefore, *possibility* seems to play a definitive role in explaining Political Will.

#### *Political Will and leadership*

All our cases provided significant evidence of an association between the course of action, strategies and habits of leadership and the plurality of elements that motivate and constraint action. In fact, all Mayors confer causal 'proprieties' of their style of leadership to both their 'inner drive' and their contextual circumstances. In other words, the arguments and justifications used, as well as the description of past histories of particular events, revealed a mechanism a causality that gives responsibility for a particular style of action to the *intention* and *possibility* that precedes it. If we consider all the previously suggested determinants of leadership styles that were identified in scholarship, grouped together in three different sorts – constitutions, context and capabilities – as argued by Lowndes and Leach (2004), the analysis of the five case studies support our original claim – expressed on the fourth hypothesis – that Political Will works as a mediating factor between them and the leader's actions. Additionally, given the fact that similar contexts were partially controlled, particularly regarding total population, socio-economic indicators and regional constraints, and that the Portuguese law does not differentiate the formal rules of governance between different municipalities, we are inclined to consider that the diversity of styles of leadership were not explained only by different assessment of capabilities nor by slight contextual variances. In effect, our data analysis suggests and

reinforces an interpretivist and subjective approach to these three eventual determinants. All our Mayors expressed awareness of this fact, particularly when comparing their action with former Mayors or with other colleagues:

*Mayor A:* “[other Mayors] complain a lot about their constitutional powers, but I think they are more than enough to do what we need to do.”

*Mayor B:* “This is my style because I feel I can do it. [...] Others are very problematic! They complicate a lot! [...] A mayor must be a ‘doer’. [...] If he isn’t, he still is a Mayor; however he is a manager of continuities... a manager of day-to-day things. ”

*Mayor C:* “He [the former Mayor] was from my party, but I have my own point of view. We are all different, [...] seeing things differently forces us to adapt.”

More than partially confirming this fourth hypothesis, which would need further elements of analysis and new ways of controlling the ‘independent variables’, the case studies were particularly helpful in providing evidence to expose the convenience of our theoretical model to the understanding of the relevant microfoundations of leader’s actions. In fact, what was explained before suggests that our fifth hypothesis – which considered style changes as a consequence of *heuristic dissonance* between expected and actual worldviews – was strongly supported by the case studies.

Essentially, one of the main advantages of addressing the subject of how does a political leader select his leadership style – our research question – is the prospect of widening the spectre of our understanding about the reasons that can explain changes and unforeseen results in leadership styles.

Different combinations of the two dimensions of Political Will can have different results as leadership styles. The same line of reasoning might contribute to better understand the fact of finding non-leaders, or what often is called the ‘lack of Political Will’. This assumption persuaded us of the relevance of studying which kind of ‘effects’ would have the different combinations of *intention* and *possibility*. Using the data collected from our case studies, which enabled us to distinguish four explicit styles of leadership, and a fifth blurred one, we are convinced to have developed a framework that contributed to explain the relationship between leadership styles and Political Will.

This analysis intends to provide a first cut, since many other distinctions are needed to capture all the stakes in any explanatory purpose, particularly with the diversity that our theoretical model has suggested. It would be impossible to capture clearly and completely



all the arguments in order to produce a finite and empirically demonstrated landscape for Political Will. However, significative data and plausible analysis of the case studies converge on our theoretical matrix which reveals itself as useful map for the ‘impact’ of Political Will on leadership styles.

Furthermore, it allowed exposing different strategies of ‘solving’ the problem of dissonance between divergent worldviews, and at the same time supported our third theoretical proposition related to the confirmation and migrations strategies<sup>3</sup> (see Table 6.1):

Case	Worldviews		Strategy	Style
	Stipulated	Actual		
<b>Mayor A</b>	egalitarian	hierarchy	Influence	<i>Facilitator</i>
<b>Mayor B</b>	hierarchy	hierarchy	Confirmation	<i>Hierarchist</i>
<b>Mayor C</b>	egalitarian	individualism	Escape	<i>Hierarchist / Regulator</i>
<b>Mayor D</b>	hierarchy	individualism	Influence	<i>Regulator</i>
<b>Mayor E</b>	hierarchy	fatalism	Influence	<i>Protector</i>

Table 6.1 – Case-studies summarized

In the cases of Mayors C and D, the same style resulted from different strategies (*escape* and *influence*) and from different starting points (*egalitarian* and *hierarchy*). Our case studies did not provide evidence to support the other two propositions, however, this does not consubstantiate its fallibility. Other cases would be necessary to test them, particularly if it is possible to control the ‘dependent variable’ – style of leadership. In knowing this, the researcher could expand its sample in order to catch these expected dissimilarities in strategies and ‘starting points’.

To venture into the explanation of Political Will, and - as a consequence - of leadership styles, using local governance context, we aimed at providing a theoretical and empirical claim with a particular emphasis on an interpretative approach to individual behavior, based on local leaders’ perceptions. These five case-studies conducted in Portuguese municipalities, persuaded us to consider that we have found enough *plausibility*

<sup>3</sup> From chapter IV: (1) One particular style of leadership can be a consequence of the same migration strategy but resulting from different starting points; (2) The same style can result from different strategies and the same starting point (just in the case of confirmation and retreat strategies); (3) The same style can result from different strategies and different starting points..



in our theoretical claims and identified additional adjustments to advance a new contribution to the understanding of Political Will as an important tool to explain leadership styles.

## CHAPTER VII – CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY REPERCUSSIONS

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*  
[Fortunate who was able to know the causes of things]  
Vergil, 'Georgics', vs490

### 7.1 - Political Will theory on Leadership

The main theme of this thesis is the claim that Political Will matters. The question of *how* to define political leadership, and *which* leadership style is more adequate to a certain situation does not have one unique answer. What was intended to develop was a framework that explained *why* the political leader adopts a particular style of leadership, therefore describing *what* creates his disposition to become a certain type of leader. The answer comes out of both contextual and individual complex frameworks, and clarity was needed. In our formulation, leadership styles are a consequence of the Political Will to act in a certain way, and this is explained through *intention* and *possibility*. Acknowledging that one *must* attain certain objectives through particular means and that this is only *possible* through certain conditions, is what gives form to Political Will and thus to the styles of leadership.

We suggested the operationalization of both dimensions of Political Will through the analytical tool of Grid-group Theory, which provided the identification of the 'mental shortcuts', or plural rationalities, that allowed further comprehension on the subjectivity of choice. The 'ways of intention and possibility', suggested by Wildavsky's and Douglas's work, provided a plural but limited collection of available 'strategies' for human action. It is through these "problematic possibilities" – as Alfred Schütz called them – that the agent makes his choices: amongst the mutually exclusive alternatives of the reasoning shortcuts available to him.

The – likely to happen – conflictuality between the heuristics of *intention* and of *possibility* is considered to have a cumulative impact on the individual's strategy of action and can, ultimately, provoke change. The *stipulated worldview*, which we considered to represent the way through which *intention* is expected to be expressed, and the *actual worldview*, indicative of the interpretation one does of the 'realistic' conditions for action, relate to each other and generate confirmation or surprise. Each has different

consequences, and particularly the second one can originate a multiplicity of strategies of action.

These potentially conflicting worldviews provide a rich typology that is expected to explain fourteen different styles of leadership (see Figure 4.10) through sixty different causal mechanisms (see Table 4.1). As we have tried to make clear, there is no single, permanent and enduring way of ‘being a leader’. Shifts occur from time to time or even from one decision to another. In fact practices differ greatly also from one particular environment to another. This kind of open-ended conclusion suggest that there is no unique formula to understand Political Will, but, albeit the uncertainties and trade-offs within the leadership styles, we advanced a framework that tried to capture most of the noteworthy literature on political leadership styles and move forward trying to advance (1) other possible styles, (2) equifinality in styles, (3) a description of expected causal mechanisms that explain styles, and (4) an explanation to why the same leader may adopt different styles. We have conjectured tentative propositions about the probable congruence and effectiveness of each leadership style with the leader’s determinants of Political Will (see Table 4.1).

We also argued that, from the researcher’s standpoint, there is only one direction of causality between Political Will and leadership styles. In fact, in the presence of a particular style of leadership, our framework allows to understand which dimensions of Political Will must be considered relevant and how they might be interacting. The opposite is not necessarily true: a leader revealing tendency to act with a particular style (if intention and possibilities were assessable *a priori*) will not immediately become a leader with the characteristics one expects to. In fact, other factors should be taken into account; particularly those that emerge, for instance, from non enabling contexts, too tied up constitutions or overestimated own capabilities. Thus, when trying to understand a leader we should consider his Political Will, and not the other way around, as it is possible to have strong Political Will without becoming a leader (let us just remember the cases of world known leaders already mentioned here, before contextual or constitutional changes, like Winston Churchill or Nelson Mandela).

*Political Will categories*

This thesis acknowledged what Herbert Simon considered to be the fundamental stance of research: “nothing is more fundamental in setting our research agenda and informing our research methods than our view of the nature of the human beings whose behaviour we are studying” (Simon, 1985: 303). In accordance we approached our phenomenon and justified our conceptualization of Political Will assuming a clear pattern of individual mechanisms that provide the understanding of human behaviour as being a consequence of intentional action.

Mises’s praxeology complemented with Schütz’s phenomenological interpretation of human action conveyed the necessary theoretical elements that contributed to the elaboration of a Political Will concept grounded on the premise of the *homo agens*. Our particular approach to agency dwells in between the poles of the structure and agency debate.

Ultimately the validity of the propositions here at stake depends on the validity of the irrefutable axiom of human action and the correctness of its logical application through the rules of deductive reasoning. Such an epistemological stance may face fierce opposition; however the logically subsequent and acceptable task would be to test those propositions against experiential data to illustrate its eventual invalidity. Individuals act within the permanently changing context of uncertainty, where explanations based on static conditions are obviously limited. In order to understand human action one needs to theorize on top of this basic assumption.

We expanded our diagram of Political Will categories (that we presented in advance; see Chapter III) and, together with a more complex map of themes resulting from data analysis, a refinement of this ‘picture’ of leader’s action is possible (see Fig 7.1).

We consider four main categories to be taken into account when addressing Political Will: *intention* and *possibility* as its two dimensions; *action* as an expression of Political Will, which in our research constitutes the content of leadership styles; and, finally, *goal* or, from a phenomenological perspective, the projected aim of action – a future to attain that constitutes itself as a more satisfactory state of affairs when compared to the agent’s ‘departure point’. Our depiction of the Political Will categories considers that agents demonstrate preference for a projected situation in a future time and, in order to attain it, must operationalize a certain amount of attitudes and behaviours and interact with

others and situations. We, also, considered another motive, prior to *intention*, which displays its *constitutive principles*: a moral drive, an ideological conviction or a personal perspective. The *origin of intention* can either be directly influential on the projected future, or influential on the principles that might guide action.

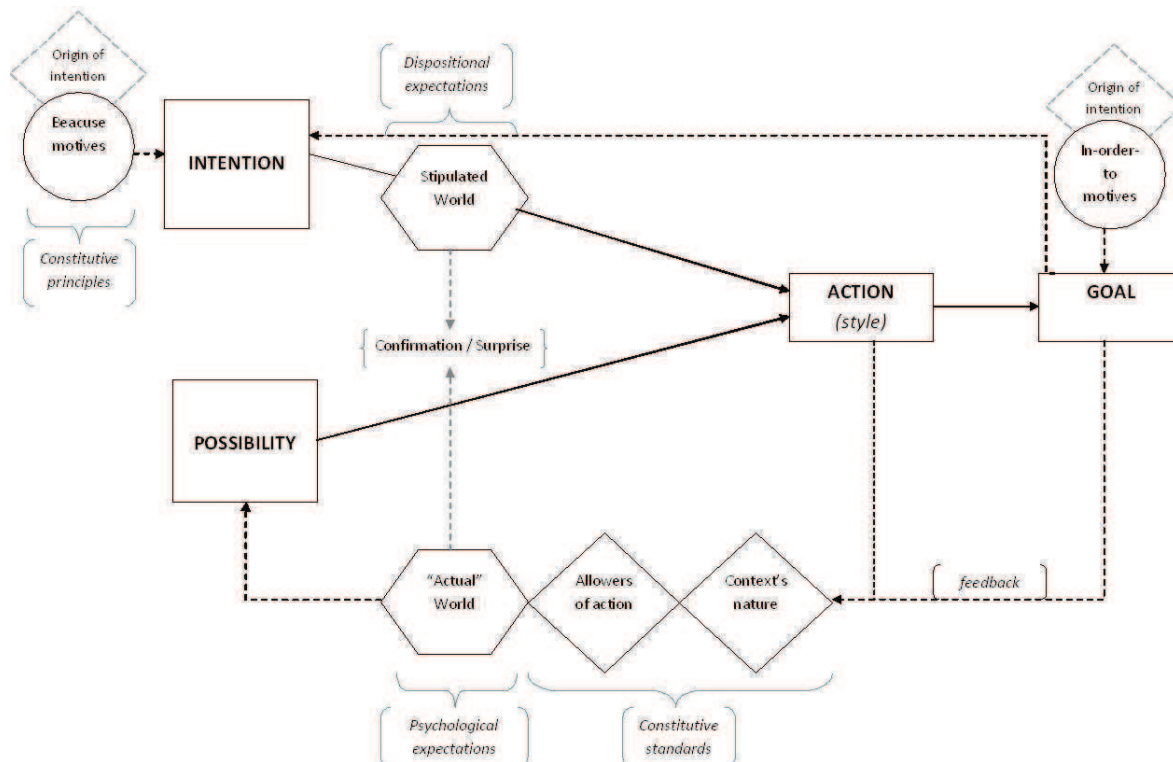


Figure 7.1 – Categories of Political Will expanded

This first dimension of Political Will is mediated by a system of plural but limited rationalities that convey – accordingly to the application we have done of Grid-group Theory – four distinct worldviews: *dispositional expectations* are, therefore, constituted in the agent's *stipulated world*.

On the other hand, Political Will is not merely an *a priori* disposition that is afterwards translated into action. In fact, we must consider 'intentionality in action', which refers to the permanent and systematic feedback, monitoring and assessment of both the *action* undertaken and the *goal* that is intended to be achieved. We consider this second dimension of Political Will to be the result of the agent's interpretation of his *context* and of the available "*allowers*" of action (namely his sense of autonomy and of political

efficacy), which represent the *constitutive standards* of Will. *Possibility* is the result of the *psychological expectations* – once again conveyed through a set of limited rationalities – and will correspond to four different worldviews: the agent's *actual world*.

It is through the confirmation of both 'worlds' or as a consequence of a surprise that results from a conflict between worldviews that *intention* and *possibility* become the content of Political Will and drive *action*.

The refinement of the explanation of this process allows a more complete and justifiable understanding of the phenomenon we analysed. Actually it opens new perspectives and requires further work. New working hypotheses must be taken into account and should be addressed in further research, although asking for an approach that will eventually step outside the formal borders of the classical political science's tools, for the most part relying on philosophical, psychological and neurosciences' perspectives. These new premises include what we have considered to represent diversity in the intricacy of the 'inner dialogue' between *must* and *can*:

- (a) Dissonance I a – action predominantly driven by *intention* in the cases where *because motives* prevail;
- (b) Dissonance I b – action predominantly driven by *intention* in the cases where *in-order motives* prevail;
- (c) Dissonance II – action predominantly driven by *possibility*.

We did not intend to analyse with such rigour and depth the process of the 'constitution' of Political Will. While permitting these microfoundational intricacies, we aimed at providing a larger picture of the phenomenon without allowing the wider representation to menace its particularities.

#### *Political Leadership styles*

Our formulation of political leadership considers it to be *an expression through action of the capacity to exercise power over others and situations*. The action we refer to – as the immanent feature of leadership – logically presupposes that it can be undertaken through different ways: multiple attitudes and behaviours are available on the menu of the leader's strategies. Rather than focusing on the Platonic question of 'who should rule' –

which would have led us to follow the classic trait theories' approach – we aimed at leadership styles, not from a descriptive or prescriptive approach, but from an intentional perspective. We aimed at understanding how does a leader select and change his way of acting.

To overcome much of the difficulties presented in previous approaches to the theme, mainly due to its dichotomical discussions (as expressed in Table 2.1), we expected to offer a new explanation through a more complete and inclusive framework, which would only arise if we departed from a realistic approach to human action. Refusing the previous positivist perspectives that considered the assessment of *action* as enough to explain *reasons for action*, we relied on the principle of intersubjectivity of human life and seek the necessary tools to grasp the meanings at stake.

Nevertheless, we bear in mind that there is “no well developed theory of political leadership, perhaps not even a universally accepted definition” (Stone, 1995, p. 96). Likewise, Political Will is also a complex concept, and its only feasible measures are indirect: policy creation, statements from political elites and surveys of leaders' opinion. However as a core idea one can say that leadership *practices* can be understood as systematic attempts to attain desired results (Haus, 2006), and that they are a consequence of leaders' *intention* and sensed *possibilities*. The answer to our research question was found in the puzzled intersection of agent and structure, motivations and constraints; this interdependence is what one needed to understand in order to find important clues on how political leadership works, and on how one can explain its important different aspects and forms of expression.

Political leadership styles are a much more complex issue than a straightforward consequence of a mixture of contextual, institutional, rules and capabilities determinants. It requires a realist approach to human motivations and particularly to the mechanisms of human action. Therefore it underlines the role of approaching the political leader as an *agent* interacting in a subjective *lifeworld* wherein external and internal dimensions, as well as its exchanges, must be taken into account.

The operationalization we suggested took into account the relevant contributions of Grid-group Theory and considered it as a depiction of plural rationalities. In fact, this allowed the identification of four ‘main styles’ of leadership and, through the interaction of both dimensions of Political Will, several other styles were explainable and expectable.



We have found some relevant evidence in the case-studies to consider these propositions as valid, although just a few were actually verified. In fact, our main objective was to refine the arguments we presented, using these plausibility probes as a way of exposing the causal mechanisms that were at stake.

More than identifying the determinants of a particular style of leadership, we framed which elements could have influence over the intentional action of the leader. Doing this, we assumed that context, constitutions and capabilities are relevant only if and when *perceived* as so. Therefore, the leadership style was not explained through personal traits nor by a particular set of environmental constraints, but, ultimately, as a result of an individual decision. We tried to translate this to a new definition of Political Will: *an individual's intent to act through interpreted possibilities in order to change the public state of affairs*, which results from the perception of a particular problem, believing that there is a solution for it, and having the necessary resources and power to do it.

#### *Epistemological and methodological considerations*

One of the advantages of the deductive approach we used combined with typological theorizing is the possibility to – with the adequate methodology – address the problem of equifinality. We considered this to be possible and presented it in the resulting propositions of our approach to Political Will as a determinant of leadership styles<sup>1</sup>: we suggested and provided ways of identifying different causal patterns that justify the same resulting typological space – or what David Dessler called a “repertoire of causal mechanisms” (Dessler, 1991). In other words the same leadership style can result from totally diverse *migration strategies*, or from different worldview's *starting points*, or even from a combination of both.

The research was conducted within the interpretive paradigm using a phenomenological approach and multiple methods of data collection, including interviews, focus groups, documents and field-notes. The data analysis that followed was informed by a systematic thematic analysis. We consider that the principle of prudence, which maintained the research design on a coherent path, avoided taking too many risks in complicating it with multiple epistemological stances. However, other approaches are possible and the theory testing and falsification are entirely doable. In fact, we took every

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote #27.

effort in order to offer clarity, intelligibility, precision and measurability to all of the theory main building blocks: (1) the conceptualization of Political Will, its categories and two dimensions; (2) the subsequent propositions; (3) the operationalization of Political Will through Grid-group Theory; (4) its dimensions' interaction, migration strategies and the resulting leadership styles; (5) and, finally, the research outcomes.

The theorem we presented on the determinants of Political Will, their interactions and subsequent consequences for leadership styles was probed through the analysis of causal mechanisms of leaders in context. Five case studies revealed to be adequate in order to test and determine our theoretical claims, showing evidence and support from reality, and provided some adjustments and refinements. These *plausibility probes* followed the claim that “deductive and empirical ways of developing knowledge and theory [...] are hardly antithetical; [...] it is desirable to link deductive and empirical approaches more closely together” (George and Bennett, 2005: 269). Our theory development objectives, given its early stage, required seeking for consistency rather than offering a complete and exhaustive testing of the complete typology we presented.

Phenomenology offered an appropriate methodology to investigate human action, namely of political leaders. Its focus on lived experiences is congruent with our research objectives and with the aim of exploring leader's Political Will. Hermeneutics added a layer of abstraction and coherence to the process, in a way that credibility is assured. In fact, understanding our research phenomenon in context – from the experiences of leaders – was possible through the use of the interpretation paradigm.

#### *Evidence and theory development*

This research provided evidence that shows both that actions reflect particular interpretations rather than objective positioning towards concrete external or internal determinants, and that these interpretations are not just derived from this positioning but also from subjective interrelations. As Craig Parsons (2007: 130) argues, and as we have seen in our case studies, similar arguments should document (1) the ‘presence’ of these subjective elements prior to action, showing (2) that people followed these elements, similarly to those who share the same interpretation and differently from others, (3) providing an argument about how these elements oriented action and (4) offering evidence that during action people followed that process.

Evidently, as our research design was not projected to test all the possibilities presented by our new typology, a much more accurate and complex analysis is desirable and possible; consequently, differentiation between styles will certainly be better explained.

The new approach on leadership styles through a grid-group dynamical analysis provided depth and understanding both on our research object and on the theory itself. First, this operationalization of the dimensions of Political Will permitted to find the relevant clues to understand how a particular course of action is chosen, and what role does *intention* and *possibilities* play in the formation of leadership styles. Mary Douglas's analytical tool provided the resources needed to explore with depth this phenomenon and shed light on the path needed to find a way out of the complexity of alternative arguments. Second, even from Grid-group theory's perspective our approach allowed some new insights on a still controversial and less explored feature – its dynamics: how and why 'cultural' shifts are possible.

Another outcome related to this theory is acknowledgeable: *fatalism*, although theoretically relevant, has been less analysed than the other worldviews. The importance of this particular 'way of life' to the understanding of political leadership styles, and evidence from our case-studies, have revealed new and relevant characteristics to add to the theory. In addition, we are convinced that the two dimensions – grid and group – should, in fact, be seen as polythetic scales, as other authors have suggested (Douglas, 1978, p. 15; Gross and Rayner, 1985, chapter 4). That is to say they include a series of aspects common to each of the resulting 'ways of life', which determine their demarcation and opposition, but those are not necessarily present in each case observed. In fact, no single aspect is either necessary or sufficient. This assumption needs – evidently – further exploration.

Our effort to explain political leadership styles through the property spaces that resulted from the operationalization of Political Will led us to seek evidence for the theoretically expected causal mechanisms, showing, as much as possible, that the categories relationships presented as necessary would have the same consequences in comparable cases.

*Limitations*

Every research is built on a fragile collection of options: the existing related scholarship that was selected, the epistemological lenses used, the methodological approach that was preferred, the adopted research design, the data analysis and its own conclusions. This delicate equilibrium is preserved only if internal coherence exists between each of its building blocks. But this delicateness is, in fact, one of the interesting aspects of the academic research, since it means permanent discussion, eventual falsification, and knowledge sedimentation, which, through time, helps creating a solid body of understanding and innovation.

In the present thesis, we tried to provide the necessary epistemological and methodological firmness and coherence in order to assure the confidence needed to advance new theoretical propositions and provide new tools for future research. However, some of the options we made need further explanation and eventual limitations can be identified.

There were several areas of exclusion or delimitation in this research. Besides the epistemological considerations, and its values and limits, that we have already analysed, there are some particular observations to be made on the process of the chosen methods and on the extent of the evidence we gathered. The first resulted from the deliberate focus on Mayors as a ‘kind of leaders’ in a particular context. Although we used terms from local political leadership, we suggest these may be common to other political leadership contexts. However, this requires further research and analysis.

Secondly, although our – several times underlined – argument for the use of plausibility probes in order to improve the process of theory development, we must acknowledge that we did not demonstrate all the possibilities – sixty – that we suggested as possible (see Table 4.1) to express the causal mechanisms at stake when operationalizing *intention* and *possibility*. Though planned in advance and methodologically intentional, this limitation amplifies the possibilities for falsifiability, which might be considered as a methodological weakness, but – as we prefer to regard it – from a Popperian perspective it improves the inherent testability of our scientific hypothesis.

Progress was made in relation to the theoretical material we had in the beginning of our research, but we acknowledge that further sophisticated analysis is required to develop a more precise understanding of both dimensions of Political Will and, hence, what has to

be done to mobilise it in order to bring about effective action. However, this paper has gone some way towards starting this analytical process, and four specific questions emerge from the abovementioned discussion for policy analysts and policy makers to consider: first, what is the role of Political Will in the governance context?; second, what is the relationship between capacity, institutions and the willingness to act?; third, what is the role of institutional design and constitutional powers in generating Political Will?; fourth, how do we deal with the lack of Political Will that could result from governments being under the pressure of networked governance, ‘handcuffing’ political leaders?

Thirdly, typological theories present the relevant strengths and the adequate flexibility that we were seeking in order to provide an answer to our research question. However it has also important limitations. In fact, as Alexander George and Andrew Bennett indicate, researchers “are liable to miss some possible causal relationships and to face indeterminacy in assessing others” (George and Bennett, 2005: 261). This may result from the fact that cases may well represent only partially the combinations theoretically expected. These authors suggest the remedies to reduce these limitations as a result of a rigorous case study design- Although a single crucial case study can be enough to provide support or challenge a theory, the risk is to have researchers enthusiastically overgeneralizing findings or to fail to recognize that some of the property spaces previously identified can be set aside, merged or altered. George and Bennett (2005: 262) suggest the use of within-case analysis as it can “strengthen the inferences that would otherwise have to be made on the basis of comparative methods alone”. As a matter of fact we combined both in order to gain more confidence on the results and to provide strong and reliable support for our theoretical model.

Lastly, it might be predictable to expect the claim that what we presented was a result of an intricate and complex deductive approach, which combined new conceptualizations, suggested original operationalizations and combined theoretical stances. This challenges our claim that intelligibility, precision and measurability was being offered. However, the allegation of the use of an elaborated argument just corroborates the effort that was done to provide the coherence and solidness of the theoretical propositions, which, ultimately correspond to an exceptionally uncomplicated statement. The main argument is actually quite simple: *political leadership styles articulate*

*a choice of action that results from the Political Will of a leader, which is determined by his intention and his discerned possibilities to act.*

## **7.2 – Leadership styles and public policies: a proposal for further work**

This research indicates that more attention is deserved to the consequences of the exercise of leadership. Our focus on the ‘motives’, determinants and dimensions that will allow understanding deliberately left behind all the *post* phenomenon effects; that is to say, we were not concerned with the differences each style presented in terms of governing techniques and public policy approaches. Although some characteristics and implications were presented in a simple way when the different resulting styles were described (see Chapter IV), further analysis is required and their coherence with existent scholarship is necessary.

However, it would be questionable to compare each of the known leadership styles found in literature to the property spaces we suggested, since our approach to this theme is substantially different and there is no single model to cleave to. Rather than trying to explain how different styles occur because leaders possess, for instance, a strong power base and sufficient political and financial resources, as the Yates' (1977) *entrepreneur*, we aimed at explaining styles as a consequence of Political Will, therefore – from an interpretative approach – strongly dependent on the leaders' perceptions. Thus, although a leader can count on enough resources he might not see them as in sufficient amount, and avoid acting as Yates expected him to act. Another example is possible with Dahl's (1961) *broker* - a highly reactive mayor who protects his position by implementing consensual decisions. He acts as a *caretaker* when he understands that consensual decisions are possible. If not, he would act with a more *executive*, *partisan* or even *ideologue* style, as Levine and Kaufman (1974) supposed.

The limitations of these *traditional* leadership styles, particularly because each of them would result from different perceptions of *context*, *constitutions* and *capabilities*, asked for a new explanation and for a more complete framework. The four main property spaces we identified are a consequence of this significant distinction between *how things are*, and how the leader *intends to act* and how he *senses they are*. The operationalization

of each dimension of Political Will suggested four main types of leadership styles (the *hierarchist*, the *fatalist*, the *individualist*, and the *egalitarian*) and ten other resulting from different migration strategies (see Figure 4.10) as a consequence of the interaction of both dimensions. We will address each of the styles focusing on their most common features regarding problem solving, management strategies, relations with followers and policy implementation, and, at the same time, verify if they are coherent with the pre-existing scholarship.

The first type we addressed was the *hierarchist*. It corresponds to the kind of leadership that possesses an independent sense of autonomy and a perception of the governance context as being tractable. This ‘controller’ has policy desires of his own, with a more proactive and strong style of leadership, since he feels a higher degree of independence towards his followers, although very aware of his group borders. The Political Will to produce a coherent and autonomous vision and decision-making, drives these leaders to adopt a more dominant approach to his context and to understand power structures as highly hierarchical and formalized, assuming a top-down approach to governance. Yates’ (1977) ‘crusader’ and ‘boss’ styles, and even Levine’s ‘ideologue’ and ‘partisan’ styles (Levine, 1974) would emerge from this kind of Political Will consequences. Within the local governance context, John and Cole’s ‘city boss’ can be a good example of the kind of leadership that possesses this *sense of autonomy* and this approach to the governance complexity, as he is expected to exert his power with strong determination.

What draws the line between two important styles of exerting this will is the leader’s *sense of efficacy*. In fact, when he believes that his actions are less effective a dominant style is expected to occur – less able to promote change, more authoritarian and with an extensive focus on formal power structures and formal government: the *autocratic* leader. However, the exercise of power will always be dependent on his government hierarchical position. Public policies are, therefore, fully controllable by his government. A higher sense of political efficacy would produce the ‘mainstream’ *hierarchist* style. This leader understands the context of governance as a phenomenon that works around him and that, although he – alone – could control it, adaptation and transformation are only possible through the use of the correct top-down policy tools. Individualistic leaders use their hierarchical power to influence and determine policy, awarding almost no importance to



partnerships and they understand their governmental organisation as a structure at their service.

The *fatalist* type represents the leadership style that is a consequence of the Political Will of a leader who is aware of an extremely complex and overwhelming governance context, and with a dependent sense of autonomy. For this leader, governance is a phenomenon almost impossible to control, as networks work beyond his powers. Its complexity, the rapid policy-change, the institutional fragmentation, and the social changes, are impossible to take in hand. His dependence on his electorate, on his own party, on the need for consensual decision-making, or his lack of resources – financial, technical, human, and his own personal traits – will make governance almost out of control. Pressman's (1972) 'figurehead' or Levine's (1974) 'ceremonial' styles of leadership fit perfectly into this category.

However there is a distinction between a *fatalist* with a useless approach to his political efficacy, or with the belief that his actions might be effective. The first case is that of the *despotic* leader, who uses the opportunities given by a shared 'fatalistic worldview' to provide the authoritarian leadership typical of dictatorships. Wildavsky illustrates this possibility with Franco's position as head of state in Spain during the twentieth century: "when followers are fatalistic, leadership is total: it is unlimited and continuous" (Wildavsky, 2006:269). This kind of leader feels governance would be an unmanageable experience if it would not be for his 'strong hand'. The second one – the *protector* - feels that in some particular cases he might have some impact on the governance arrangement or even produce change by capitalizing the unhelpful and desperate sense of uncertainty of followers. Precise, focalised, short-termed actions are expected from this kind of leader, who expects his actions to cause some effect only in explicit and specific policy domains. A routine and reproductive style of leadership would fit into this category, as Dahl's 'broker' and Levine's 'caretaker', or more appropriately John and Cole's 'protector'.

The *individualist* type represents the leadership style that reveals low levels of communal involvement and a perception of the governance context as being atomized. The set of activities of this kind of leader is predominantly internal-oriented (Mandell and Keast, 2007), which include planning, controlling and decision-making, and continues to make sense on recent conceptualisations of leadership. Prescribed authoritative relations in this case would be limited to internal organizational affairs, and would not spread out for

the broader governance context, as a consequence of the independent sense of autonomy, which in most cases might result from political accountability being seen as irrelevant, or as a consequence of an eventual lack of resources. This way, ‘if limited by the environment’ the option would be to expand and to improve the ‘inside’ dimensions of the governmental institutions. The *individualist* prefers to address problem solving through improving his formal government traditional strategies and relying on the capabilities of other policy agents.

Leadership within the administrative organisation – organisational leadership – focuses the acts of leadership within the relationship between the political and the administrative levels in governments. Structures that endow the leader with considerable power – mostly in an executive form – over the political agenda and decision-making will allow him to attach great importance to strategic organisational guidance. What introduces an important dichotomy in this style of leadership is this type’s sense of the political efficacy of his actions. The belief that changes in the context can be produced because he has sufficient resources to do that would represent the kind of leader who has confidence on ‘new public management’ strategies, particularly those that emerge from technical expertise – the *technocrat* leader. On the other hand we would have the *regulator* style – leaders with a top-down approach to their responsibilities. Banfield’s ‘entrepreneur’, with his own policy desires would attempt to shape communities’ preferences and expectations in order to build the needed consensus, also fits into this category (particularly when influenced by hierarchic worldviews).

The *egalitarian* type contains the different styles of leadership that result from the awareness of a networked governance context of leaders with an *interdependent* sense of autonomy. The influence of this type’s corresponding worldview is particularly significant in contemporary governance and public policy debates. This leader is extremely aware of the complexity of the governance arrangement, and will be called to play the role of finding common ground between organisations and of generating collaboration (Sweeting, 2000). This expands the traditional role of leaders, expecting extra responsibilities from them on the partnership venture. Strategic, transformative and cooperative leadership are key characteristics of the *egalitarian* type and its worldview influence. As stated by Borraz and John (2004) this is also an answer to the need to “manage large and complex networks, sets of issues and interest groups”.

Different migration strategies help understanding the Political Will to act accordingly to a *collaborative* style or a *facilitative* one. The ‘collaborator’ assumes leadership through regular contacts with his constituents and identifies communities’ preferences as rooted in each actor. The characteristics of traditional administration do not apply in this kind of collaborative networks, since there is a weaker intra-organisational view, and a leader-follower relation more closer to the ‘delegation’ strategies than to ‘selling’ or ‘telling’ (Hersey, 1984). The emphasis is on independent organizations working in concert, with the leader as a process catalyst, emphasizing shared power or ‘power-with’ rather than ‘power-over’ (Follett 1924).

O’Leary, Gerard, and Bingham (2006) define collaborative public management as

“...a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations. Collaborative means to *co-labor*, to cooperate to achieve common goals, working across boundaries in multisector relationships. Cooperation is based on the value of reciprocity.”

Several scholars have articulated models of leadership from a collaborative governance perspective and sometimes called it “facilitative”. However we will distinguish both styles, accordingly to the leader’s belief in his political efficacy, which results from the influence of a different *worldview*.

John and Cole’s ‘visionary’ – as he combines elements of strong leadership and the will to bring different actors together – is a good example of the ‘facilitator’ type. Slightly different is the case of the ‘consensual facilitator’ (which is closer to the *egalitarian* mainstream type), since there is a higher degree of the leader’s autonomy in the first case. The ‘facilitator’ – influenced by a hierarchic worldview – has the notion of asymmetrical power relations between different partners, and – as claimed by Geddes (2000) – considers the governmental authority to have a dominant role. Although public policy results from negotiated goal-setting, the facilitator’s higher sense of autonomy *allows* him to feel responsible for steering communities and delivering a strong vision for the collective. For this style, and regarding local governance context, we can draw on the work of Svava (1994) to whom this leader is “a facilitator who promotes positive interaction and a high level of communication among officials in city government and with the public and who also

provides guidance in goal setting and policy making” (Svara, 2003). Greasley and Stoker (2008) claim that “urban leaders are expected to develop a role as facilitating networkers who can pull together a fragmented set of partners and citizens around a shared vision for the future of their urban area”. These facilitative mayors – seen as regime builders (*idem*) – would need: (a) context awareness of the complexity of local governance through networks, otherwise it would be inconsistent to talk about facilitating networks; (b) high sense of autonomy, outward-looking and are not tied to any particular resources constraints, partisan borders, or consensual-driven political action; and (c) the belief of enough political efficacy, being able to provide vision and strategy to the network.

These different styles comprise a profound diversity regarding resources used by leaders and the strategies they follow. The refinement and improvements that the case studies allowed to do permit us to advance further distinctive features of the four main leadership styles we identified. The particularities of formal and informal resources (Sweeting, 2002), of different strategies (*cf.* Stoker, 2000) and of rules that result from Grid-group theory, are useful to explain each style features and their repercussion for public policies (see Table 7.1).

This feature’s inventory intends to provide a first cut, since many other distinctions are needed to capture all the stakes in any explanatory purpose. It would be impossible to clearly and completely capture all the arguments in order to produce a finite landscape for policy analysis. It would require also to expand this analysis in order to cover all the other styles that result from the identified property spaces, namely those resulting from *migration strategies* (the facilitator, the protector, the technocrat, the collaborator, the regulator, the adhocrat) and the *extreme positions* (the autocratic, the despotic, the meteoric, and the charismatic leaders). Some of these have already been the subject of considerable research, but a coherent and more precise analysis will require further work. However, significant and plausible readings of a great deal of past research converge on our property spaces matrix as a useful map for leadership styles and their public policy’s outcomes.

	Hierarchist	Fatalist	Individualist	Egalitarian
<b>Rules</b>	Directive with power over	Responsive with power over	Responsive with power with	Strategic with power to
<i>Grid prescriptions</i>	rules numerous and complex	rules numerous and complex	few binding rules	few binding rules
<i>Group boundaries</i>	group identification	less restrictive transactions	less restrictive transactions	group identification
<i>Personal approach</i>	"in charge"	"in charge, but can't change"	"not the only in charge"	"can change"
<b>Political Efficacy</b>	efficacy results from authority	the networks' complexity inhibits efficacy	just positional in the network	efficacy results from the group
<i>Context</i>	tractable	untractable	independent	uncertain
<i>History</i>	fosters sense of efficacy	inhibits sense of efficacy	irrelevant	irrelevant
<i>Capabilities</i>	enough	never enough	adequate	complementary
<b>Sense of Autonomy</b>	the leader dictates the rules	the rules lock the leader	life outside the rules	the group rules
<i>Constitution</i>	allows	restrains	allows	restrains
<i>Accountability</i>	controlable	controls	disperse	permanent
<i>Resources</i>	enough	not enough	scattered	shared
<b>Others seen as</b>	having differentiated roles	individuals with little to say about their life - it is organised from the outside	The ability to control others is a measure of their position in the network	intensive relations between members
<b>PUBLIC POLICIES</b>				
<b>Public Services ruled by</b>	Bureacracy	Uncertainty	Markets	Mutuality
<b>Narrative</b>	Formalization	Adaptation	Modernization	Devolution
<i>Resources</i>				
<b>Authority</b>	Institutional	Institutional and mostly inner-organisational	Positional	Positional and mostly beyond the organisation
<b>Legitimacy</b>	From formal and organizational power structures	Elected	From relevant contributions	Elected and from the pivotal actions as regime builder
<b>Profile</b>	Relevant	Irrelevant	Discrete	Active, vision-provider, and partnership builder
<i>Inward approach:</i>				
<b>Control over policy making</b>	Implements policies which can require the compliance of others	Depends on consensus building to deliver policy	Relies on influence strategies and manages policies	Provides guidance to networked deliberation
<b>Control over budgeting</b>	Seeks total control over budgeting	Limited control	Dependent on formal organisational rules	Only partial control over network budget
<b>Patronage</b>	Considerable powers - leadership through telling; used for controlling	Leadership through participation; patronage might facilitate governance	Not significant outside government's institutional borders	Influence and delegation
<i>Outward approach:</i>				
<b>Cultural persuasion</b>	Using authority and power over resources	Allowing consensus	Developing managerial approach to deliberation	Promoting partnership
<b>Communication</b>	Top-down	Bottom-up, encourages participation	Encourages customer / provider relations	Facilitates learning and encourages access
<b>Finance</b>	Subsidising agents for own survival	Subsidising accordingly to agents' demands	Subsidising agents for their survival	Subsidising Partnership
<b>Monitoring</b>	Checking leadership performance	Checking consensus performance	Checking network's performance	Checking community' performance
<b>Structural reform</b>	Expanding control over networks opportunities	Avoiding disagreement	Improving organisational efficiency	Extending democracy

Table 7.1 – Leadership styles: resources, strategies, roles and rules



### 7.3 – Further repercussions

This thesis captured the value of Political Will in order to understand leadership, since most of the extant scholarship cannot recognize its nuances and complexities, leading to static and often deterministic approaches to the phenomenon. Furthermore, contemporary research has a tendency to narrow leadership to a kind broker with a collaborative style who uses influence and soft power. We presented a descriptive – theoretically informed – delineation of what political leadership is about, and presented Political Will as a causal analytical framework. As a consequence, we offered insights that will allow understanding the existent multiplicity of approaches, and will permit coherence among them and avoid misconceptions. Above all, we believe to have contributed to the rediscovery of the variety of political leadership styles.

The subjective and interpretive approach to the ‘reasons’ for leadership styles, particularly underlined when we argued that Political Will represents a mediating factor between independent objective elements and the dependent leadership styles, could lead further research to consider independent variables not to be manipulable. The elasticity of the variables and the possibility to control them is highly relevant for the assessment policy makers do of a particular theoretical claim. In fact, full contingency, although relevant for policy analysis matters, is absolutely ‘disappointing’ and uninteresting for policy making. The importance of these ‘leverage variables’ can be moderated if the new concepts and its operationalization is not done with a disproportionate level of abstraction, assuming that recognizable, simple and decipherable elements of analysis, together with the adequate level of parsimony, can fulfil the conditions to be considered a relevant policy applicable theory.

In fact, we did not present a theory of absolute contingency and complete incidental action of political leaders. Quite the contrary, we offered a framework that allows (a) the identification of which causal mechanisms can be at stake when a particular style of leadership is identified; (b) which plural, but limited, rationalities are ‘available’; and at the same time provide a (c) wider picture of human action and its consequences. By addressing equifinality, we have also contributed to avoid one-dimensional and eventually simplistic approaches to leadership styles, which might consider similar outcomes as having the same causal explanations. Demystifying the equifinality of political leadership styles contributes appreciably to avoid incorrect policy interpretations.

Following Gerry Stoker's claim that "policy makers should be more critically self-aware of the micro-foundations that underlie their decision-making and governance choices" (Stoker, 2008: 2), we consider that the development of a concept of Political Will and its operationalization can assist policy specialists, as well as scholars, to orient themselves to this phenomenon and its consequences – with which they must deal. As argued by George and Bennett, "scholars can make an important contribution by challenging simplistic concepts being employed by policymakers. [...] they can often provide a useful broader discussion of how to think about and understand [a] general phenomenon" (George and Bennett, 2005: 283). The possibility of 'understanding' political leadership as a 'consequence' of Political Will, and at the same time, comprehend what is at stake when we refer to the latter, may at first sight seem uninteresting if one is looking for predictability. However, this relevant policy making feature, can only be attainable after the adequate supply of understanding about which mechanisms are being considered. The reorganization of public services, the constitutional reforms and institutional design must be particularly well informed on the microfoundational logics of individuals, namely of political leaders, as it can produce disparate answers and result in different incentives.

Reiterating our thesis argument – *political leadership styles articulate a choice of action that results from the Political Will of a leader, which is determined by his intention and his discerned possibilities to act* – we consider that further work should:

1. Explore the expanded categories of Political Will and their interactions, namely investigating the Dissonances I a, I b, and II;
2. Test with particular attention the propositions that set the reasons for the lack of Political Will;
3. Expand – by controlling the 'dependent variable' – the analysis of other styles of leadership and explore other *migration strategies* that were not addressed on our case studies;
4. Explore each style's features individually in all its extent in order to provide more information with relevance for political science scholarship (for instance, to assess how prone is a particular style to endure when compared to other more 'capable of self-destruction' – given that domination creates 'victims' and



victims cannot be relied upon to continue cooperating, a style that conveys ‘domination’ must be undermined under a democratic regime);

5. Explore the applicability of our research agenda in other leadership contexts, besides local governance;
6. Encourage historical analysis that uses our propositions and check its applicability;
7. Expand the analysis of the impact of different political leadership styles on public policies;
8. Encourage other methodological approaches to these research questions and hypothesis;
9. Encourage the *falsifiability* test of the claims we have presented.

Ludwig von Mises reminded that “[m]an is not infallible...He can never be absolutely certain that his inquiries were not misled and that what he considers is certain truth is not error. All that man can do is to submit all his theories again and again to the most critical reexamination” (Mises, 1999: 68). We keep this in mind when we take the risk of presenting some findings that result from our research, and we are – first and foremost – certain of its limitations. Predictions, as George and Bennett (2005: 283) state, “should not be regarded as the most important goal of academic scholarship”. Understanding, therefore, is just a first step, and we intended to contribute to this endeavour offering a theory on Political Will and the Grid-group dynamics of Political Leadership Styles. Further repercussions are unpredictable, but optimistically expected.



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## ANNEX A – CONSENT AGREEMENT

### CONSENT AGREEMENT

(Translated from the original letter in Portuguese, printed on letterhead paper of the Department)

**Case study on Leadership in Portuguese Municipalities  
Research for PhD in Political Sciences  
University of Aveiro**

**To:** Mayor of XXXXXXXXXXXX

**From:** Filipe Teles

University of Aveiro

**Date:** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2008

We are conducting case study research on Leadership in Portuguese Municipalities as part of a PhD project in Political Sciences, by Filipe Teles, at the Department of Social, Legal and Political Sciences of the University of Aveiro. Besides this interview, the researcher intends to conduct other interviews with your staff. No discomforts or stresses are foreseen.

This consent letter is provided to inform you as to how data collected from the case study will be used by the researcher.

Information will be gathered through interviews and document analysis and will be processed according to established case study methods. This study is an PhD thesis project which requires a final document to be presented in the University of Aveiro, and to further be published for the access of the community. Copies of the thesis will be kept in University, and will be accessible by the general public via the internet. Further presentation of papers at national or international conferences and publications in a variety of outlets will occur. Information collected from the interview can be used in publications and electronically handled via web sites. The collected data is not intended to cause any inconvenience or uncomfortable situations. Therefore, when considered as confidential and stated as so, it will not be used for analysis.

By signing this letter, you are agreeing to allow the information gathered in this interview to be analyzed, published and presented in public. There are no other agreements, written or verbal, related to this study, beyond that expressed in this consent form.

#### CONSENT

I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary. My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Mayor, Date:

From the Department of Social, Legal and Political Sciences:  
I certify that all information provided on this letter is accurate,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of President of the Department: Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher: Date:



## **ANNEX B - PARTIAL REPRODUCTION OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

### **MunB-M-080704**

Interview: Mayor B [real name omitted]

Date of recording: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Location: Municipality B [identification omitted]

Transcription and translation: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2008

#### **(Q1) What are your tasks as a Mayor?**

(A1) I need to be here and make everyone and everything work! To know if deputy mayors are doing their work, if staff is doing their work, and particularly – and I have that role personally ascribed to me – the public infrastructures department is very important. It must be always working. Must be doing things, planning new ones, finding money for them. Municipalities need mayors to have initiative: to do investments.

There is an important condition behind all of this. When I was elected as Mayor I understood that anyone in this public role must work in order to promote the quality of life of their citizens. But that is not a simple thing to attain. And how do I do it? I know I must do my best and create jobs; create better conditions for citizenship; roads, gardens, avenues, schools, cultural equipments. Imagine that I was a Mayor and it was impossible for me to have the opportunity to build public equipments: I wouldn't be a Mayor!

#### **(Q1a) ...and how do you do it?**

I set the goals and the objectives. It is because of my way of leading that this Municipality as developed. We offered quality of life to all. For instance, municipal budget is almost all a consequence of my inputs.



But there are things... Partnerships with local associations and subsidizing them is fundamental. It is very important to support them, since they are like small “lungs” of the society. I must not stop this practice of subsidizing. Financially, and mostly logistically. This support is fundamental.

Another important thing is to have the right people around. Being able to appoint people is fundamental to manage the municipality. I appoint people after hearing my deputy mayors, but it is often a case of intuition. I must say that in 15 years I only made one mistake.

And, of course, to be a leader... As a leader, I’m a leader. I do not wait until tomorrow when you can do it today, because efficacy is guaranteed. I have all the autonomy I need, obeying the law.

**(Q1b) Can you give one example of how things work?**

I could be here all day. It is about everything we do. It’s the town-hall competence. And that is what people expect from us. If we are efficient, then the municipality and its population grow and get wealthier. Without this leading role, I don’t know where we all would be right now!

This is my style because I feel I can do it. But this is not easy. However it is not impossible! Others are very problematical! They complicate a lot! Do you know what really differentiates me?

**(Q1c) ...?**

A mayor must be a “doer”. Ideas and promises are not enough. If he isn’t, he still is a Mayor, however is a manager of continuities... a manager of day-to-day things. He needs to get involved and make things happen.

**(Q2) What constitutes your success as a Mayor?**

(A2) Success is the joy and fulfilment of seeing the work done. To see a tree grow. To do a road the communists didn’t want me to do it; to see

swimming pools, markets, sports equipments, library... We were the first municipality in the country to present an urban development project to the Ministry and we were recognized by this.

In parallel we need to create employment. Everyone must admit that since I'm here more jobs were created in the municipality, by the private investments we attracted.

**(Q3) What contributes the most for that success?**

(A3) The fact is that I love this.

**(Q3a) And that means...**

My competencies and the local government's competencies are enough. I have the "presidential" powers that are needed to do this. I can approve – alone – thousands of Euros, without waiting for the executive board's approval. This is a way of conciliating urgency with efficacy. And I have efficacy. When I think of a project I can do it! I have sufficient political powers, resources, and competences.

We were capable because we had the human resources capacity to do this. And when we did not have them I employed them. I do not ignore I'm a member of a larger executive. I did not do this alone. However, regarding those big investments I told you about, I always had unanimity. No one has the courage to say no: when I say that I have a project and have enough co-funding, they have no choice. I offer the project and the way to do it. They understand what is needed and approve it. And for the general population the same. They accept it.

What you have seen today happens every day, with my deputy mayors. To discuss things, to work, to do brainstorming...

**(Q3b) ... without any problem?**

During the first years as Mayor I had no difficulties: had a good relation with everyone. But when our public investments started to appear (avenues, roads, gardens... only gardens I did ten, TEN! – and I can show you all), I received letters, people saying, the Municipality is changing. “You are a great Mayor”.

And the opinion of people matters. It matters in terms of votes. Until 1994 no one was elected with a voting majority over hundreds votes... I won my first election by 88 votes, the second one by five thousand, the third with 4500, and now seven thousands.

**Q3c) ... and that influences you?**

What influences me the most is the intuition of what is better for the city, and for the municipality. Not the people, the party, the executive, the government, but the intuition. However, it is important to listen to those who tell us things with sincerity. Because I know when some are saying I’m the greatest, but in fact they are saying: “go f#### yourself”.

In fact, there are no big external influences that shape my decisions. I decide on my own. I rely on the work of my staff, but they know who is in charge. For instance, meetings are important to give feedback, but must be kept short.

I must say my motivation is my intuition for a strategy for the municipality, and I am evaluated by that. The objective is to create wealth for the municipality. And objectives can change over time... When I started here I received people at my office saying they were unemployed, without food to eat, and I was left here crying. That was not what I expected to be doing at the time. I called my staff and said: we expected to build a new town hall, but - in fact – we need to create jobs. During my first years in office I reversed the trend and created jobs, and that is what

explains more votes. I'm not saying the fault is of my predecessors, but it was a national trend they were unable to reverse.

**(Q3d) And it worked...**

The new businesses thanked us, and acknowledged our role. Furthermore we created public services of urban transports. It changed everything.

Of course, some things do not happen as we expect. When we do a mistake, next time we need to think more and more. And it stays with us...

Local government's work is determinant in the municipality's development. We must lead. Businesses are self-focused and when we do a partnership with a particular business, we risk hearing that there must be something for the Mayor to win with the partnership. Why that business and not the other? I need to defend myself. I have no partnerships.

**(Q3e) Could you explain this better?**

The Mayor's actions determine the quality of life of the population, particularly through public investment. That is what I believe in. The Mayor must direct: private businesses are egoistic and associations are self-centred. It would not work if I had to wait for them. I have no partnerships, because they are harmful for the success of the municipality.

**(Q3f): And how do you consider their eventual inputs?**

Imagine: when I want to do an important investment, I call my executive, the representatives of the *freguesias* – almost all from the socialist party – and ask for opinions. I have my own. I must be sincere: sometimes they say no, but I know it must be done. A decision against it is very rare, because it is so evident. This is how I've done so many public investments.

When I want to do a swimming pool I called the technicians. When I wanted to recover the municipal theatre I called a friend of the secretary of state and he suggested a name: and here he is working with me. And so on.

**(Q4) What is your role in contributing for the future of the municipality?**

My work reveals it. The municipality is changing for better. Didn't you see it before? We leaded change and contributed for the success of our municipality. It took some time, but I brought a lot of businesses to work here.

My role is determinant for the future of the municipality. Let me give you an example: if we look at what we have done, we contributed for the future of our young people. I influenced the future positively, conquering it and not postponing it.

But, to do this, I'm not closed inside the walls of the town hall. We all have to work. I'm a member of this large group.

**(Q4a) What group?**

Everyone... my best group is my connexion with people. To be with everyone and hear them... the group is everyone in the municipality. All the groups, smaller ones, are only part of this larger one. That is my team. And I must motivate them. My staff is just the end of a production line. My staff is the municipality. At the end I listen and I decide.

People's motivation results from my style. If they like, they believe in me. If not... I must tell you something, and it is true: since I was first elected the leader of my class (on the third grade) I never lost one election. I was president of a local sporting club for twelve years and no one resigned. I'm Mayor for 15 years, and no one has resigned since then.

That is why I believe the success depends on the Mayor!

The profile of any leader is relevant. Authority derives from my style. The way I do things gives me that authority. Today I said to a colleague Mayor: “go f### yourself”... and everyone understood me. It is my style. It is very important to know me. And they know how I work. Particularly the personnel here. When my staff sees I’m worried they try to help me... I’m sincere and spontaneous. There is nothing hidden between me and my staff.

But local government is really relevant. Local government creates the rules... the dynamics of the municipality is a consequence of the local government dynamics. It is not the only one but it is determinant. A dynamic municipality with a pale local government is very rare. Normally it is condemned.





## **ANNEX C - PARTIAL REPRODUCTION OF FIELD NOTE**

### **MunC-FN-080709**

- *Prior to the day of the interview:*

Arrangements for the case study with chief of staff: two days earlier. It worked: few minutes after first contact he called back (“gladly” he said). And ok for the time and day I suggested.

- *On arrival:*

Town hall – waiting! Receptionist explained why: few minutes since the Mayor is finishing a meeting (with XXXXXXX).

- *Before interview:*

Interview was conducted at his office.

Coffee

We sat on two armchairs with a small table between us.

- *During interview:*

No interruptions by his staff.

Gave the impression of having all the time needed: “can go through lunch if necessary”.

Finished after 110 minutes.

Used the words “egalitarian society” a few times, particularly after the formal interview had finished. The priorities were set regarding this major goal. “Unemployment is a warning sign”